

# NEW DATA ON CLERGY ABUSE

On the same day we ran our *New York Times* ad, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released its 2010 Annual Report on clergy sexual abuse.

In 2009, there were six credible accusations made against over 40,000 priests during that year; in 2010, the number was seven.

As usual, most of the accused are homosexuals: 83 percent of the alleged victims were male, and three-in-four were postpubescent. This is consistent with what we have known for years. In other words, it is a lie to say the Catholic Church has suffered from a pedophilia problem. Those who say that this number reflects the greater access priests have had to altar boys are wrong: the more priests have access to girl altar servers, the more likely they are to choose males (there has been a slight uptick in male victims over the past decade).

As usual, the cases date back decades: two-thirds occurred between 1960 and 1984, and three-in-four of the offenders are now dead or have been laicized. The most common time period for new allegations made in 2010 was 1970-1974. That this was when the sexual revolution was at its height is no coincidence. Nor is it a coincidence that the discovery of AIDS in 1981 effectively ended the sexual revolution—not a change in mores.

While this is good news, it is still disconcerting to see hundreds of alleged victims coming forth every year—with their lawyers in tow—expecting that their allegations of what happened many decades ago can somehow be substantiated. Just as distressing is the tendency to call the cops over such matters as “kissing girls on the top of the head,” etc.