

SEX ABUSE REPORT

On February 27, professors from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City released a report on priestly sexual abuse since 1950. In anticipation of the report, the Catholic League prepared its own report; it was released in early February. The complete document is reprinted in this edition of *Catalyst*.

The Catholic League strongly believes that no reasonable discussion of this issue can take place absent comparative data. What good does it do, we ask, to discuss sexual misconduct among priests if we don't have data on ministers, rabbis, psychologists, coaches, public school teachers and others?

The Special Report, *Sexual Abuse in Social Context: Catholic Clergy and Other Professionals*, does not excuse wrongdoing by priests or bishops. What it seeks to understand is how widespread the problem of sexual abuse is. In doing so, it directs the conversation away from an isolated look at priests and towards a more realistic examination of the problem.

The report was sent to every bishop in the U.S. and to every major media outlet in the nation. The president of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, Bishop Wilton Gregory, thanked William Donohue for writing the report.

The initial reaction to the report has been encouraging. Many priests feel that they have been under siege in recent times: they resent being singled out for scrutiny. That is why so many of them are pleased with this report—it helps to stop the scapegoating that has been taking place.