

STILL IN DENIAL

The Jesuit magazine, *America*, has done important work, but when it comes to understanding clergy sexual abuse, it has failed miserably. The latest example is an article by Michael O'Loughlin. It is an uncritical look at a report issued by professors from the Jesuit-sponsored Santa Clara University.

According to the report, sexual repression and clericalism caused the crisis and homosexuality has nothing to do with it. It is thrice wrong.

Why is it that in the 1950s, when the Church was much less open about matters sexual—"repressed" according to its critics—there was practically no sexual abuse of minors? Why is it that when the lid came off in the 1960s, many of the seminaries turned into dens of iniquity? That's when the scandal exploded.

Clericalism may explain why some bishops enabled the molesters, but it has nothing to do with why some priests became molesters.

So who were the molesters? We know from the John Jay studies on this issue that 81 percent of the victims of priestly sexual abuse were male and that 78 percent were postpubescent. It matters not a whit that many homosexual priests who molested young men do not identify as homosexual; what matters is their behavior, not their self-perception.

No problem can ever be fixed if those who profess an interest in doing so live in a comfortable state of denial. They need to be shaken from their comfort zone and finally look reality in the face.