

# WHEN GUIDELINES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Guidelines in dealing with priestly sexual abuse are important but they are no substitute for common sense and common decency. Consider, for example, what has happened in two archdioceses, that of Boston and that of Milwaukee.

In 1977, Rev. Paul Shanley, the Boston pedophile and homosexual, said that when an adult and child have sex, "the adult is not the seducer—the kid is the seducer." In 1988, Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland said that when an adult priest and an adolescent have sex, "sometimes not all adolescent victims are so innocent." In 1994, Weakland said when the teenagers get "a little older" that is when the "squealing comes in."

In 1981, a woman began complaining to the Archdiocese of Boston about the predatory behavior of Rev. Paul Shanley. The following year, Auxiliary Bishop Thomas V. Daily (now the Bishop of Brooklyn) wrote to Shanley advising him "not to speak at all when she calls but merely to leave her hanging until she hopefully gets discouraged."

In 1984, three Milwaukee parochial school teachers wrote to Archbishop Rembert Weakland about the predatory behavior of Rev. Dennis Pecore. Weakland wrote back saying that "any libelous material found in your letter will be scrutinized carefully by our lawyers." The teachers were then summarily fired. In 1988, the Wisconsin Court of Appeals chastised Weakland's response to the teachers as "cavalierly insensitive."

Here are some more disturbing parallels: both Shanley and Pecore were open advocates of homosexuality. In the 1970s, Shanley lectured on

the merits of sodomy and sold tapes advocating homosexuality. In 1987, Pecore was named in a \$3 million lawsuit (along with Weakland) for attempting to fire a priest as principal of a parochial school simply because the priest refused to condone the homosexual lifestyle. Under Cardinal Law, Shanley was moved from parish to parish. Under Archbishop Weakland, Pecore (twice convicted of sexual assault) was moved from parish to parish.

This is a problem no guidelines can resolve. What is needed is a Christian response to allegations and fidelity to the Church's teachings.

Judging from the expressed resolve of the bishops coming out of the Dallas meeting, we firmly believe that instances like this will not be repeated. We highlight these cases only to show that bureaucratic directives can only do so much good.