

WHY I WROTE MY LATEST BOOK

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To be a good writer, it is important, at least for me, to have a passion for the subject. I brought my passion to bear in writing *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*. The book is expected to be available from the publisher, Ignatius Press, in mid-September, and in early October from Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Catholic bookstores. They all accept pre-orders.

In the October issue of *Catalyst*, I will offer a synopsis of the book. First I'd like to explain why I wrote it.

It is usually the subtitle of a book that discloses what it is about. In this case, both the title and the subtitle offer an accurate representation. The title indicates that we have not been told the truth about the scandal. While there have been some good books on this subject, many have been written by those with an ax to grind, and none has been written by a social scientist.

It is my contention that we have had not one scandal, but two. Scandal I is the familiar one, namely the one brought about by molesting priests and their enabling bishops. Scandal II, which no one wants to acknowledge, was not caused by the Church: it was caused by those who have distorted the truth, lied about events, and have a vested ideological or economic interest in never letting go.

The subtitle of the book suggests that we have been duped. The guilty parties are many. Importantly, they either cannot, or will not, tell the truth about what happened. For example, they would have us believe that the Catholic Church is unique in having had a problem with sex between adults and minors. As I show, this is patently false. This falsehood is what Scandal II is all about.

I expect that when the book comes out, there will be considerable blowback. After all, I challenge the most popular myths about the scandal. To cover myself, I have 823 footnotes detailing what, in fact, happened, and why it happened.

In some ways this book was a joy to write; in some ways it was troubling. It was a joy because it gave me the satisfaction of setting the record straight. Quite frankly, the conventional wisdom about this subject has been wrong almost every step of the way. It's time to clear the air and get to the heart of things. It was troubling because much of what I wrote about is not pretty.

There is much good news in the book. Scandal I is long over. What is being reported today about priestly sexual abuse are almost all old cases—very old cases. Much progress has been made. Those involved in Scandal II don't want to acknowledge this and indeed have tried to manipulate the public into thinking it is still ongoing.

Perhaps the most controversial part of the book will be my analysis of why Scandal I took place. There are many reasons for this, and you will have to read the book to get a full account. Without question, my discussion of the role that homosexual priests have played—they are responsible for most of the abuse—will cause many in the media and education to explode. Unfortunately, this will also be true of some members of the clergy, including higher ups.

I have told my staff many times that as president of the Catholic League, I'm not engaged in a popularity contest. Do I care what people say about me? Sometimes. It matters, in large part, who is saying it. I cannot tell you how many times I have been condemned to Hell, libeled, slandered, and dumped upon in the most vicious and obscene ways—to say nothing of the death threats (and I mean real ones). They all want to silence me, one way or the other. This has been going on for decades.

These people are not so much critics as they are thugs, well educated though many of them are. Regrettably, I have never seen a time where there are more of them than today.

I say at the outset of the book that we as Catholics are "called to tell the truth, not shade it." That explains why I wrote this book. In other words, just as we need an accurate diagnosis of our ailment from our doctor before we can be treated, we need an accurate diagnosis of clergy sexual abuse before we can make sure this never happens again.

Almost all priests have never had an accusation made against them, and most of them are good guys. Yet they are subjected to invidious stereotypes, innuendo and out-and-out lies. Many are humble and are reluctant to strike back. I get it. But lay people can be more aggressive in defending them.

It is my hope that Catholics who read this book will have a much better understanding of what happened and why, and will come to appreciate the enormous progress we have made. They will also learn how we've been played by those who don't want it to end.