

## QUESTION #5

**QUESTION:** Do you find that many commentators on abuse, especially those connected with the church lack real knowledge, experience, and empathy with abuse victims?

I was raped by two violent sexual predator relatives. I knew them well and they ripped open by bowels. I required multiple surgeries to my anus and testicles. It took years for skin tissue to heal. It was extremely painful. When one pissed into my mouth, it was no fun. I was forced to swallow.

**ANSWER:** The short answer is yes, yes, yes. Most church authorities and spokespeople do not face the reality of what a victim suffers. Bishops think and talk in terms of “touch” and treat priest/bishop offenders as “sinners”. And then justify themselves with platitudes, “Aren’t we all sinners?” They refuse to see all child abuse as torture. That is what it is. Torture. I could not read your story without crying for the pain of that little boy and sadness for what you have to carry for a lifetime.

Recently I contacted my local bishop, Robert McElroy, to inform him about victims of two predator priests who had been active in his diocese. First time he listened and said some sincere sounding platitudes about moral responsibility.

During a second visit when I outlined more particulars and a time line with emphasis on the long term effects of clergy abuse he was cold and dismissive. Despite this I hoped for a third visit to engage in some specific means of recourse and remedy.

When I called to make that appointment I received a voice mail from his secretary — *“The bishop has no time in his schedule to see you. And he does not see any time in the foreseeable future when he could have time to see you.”*

The church simply does not get the harm that abuse and torture that thousands of its priests perpetrate. The pain goes on.