

Report by Ireland's Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse

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I am thoroughly saddened, disgusted and angered at yet another sweeping indictment of individuals and church authorities including the leadership of both male and female religious communities.

In 2004 it was the “report commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.”

Today it is the commission set up by the Irish government and headed by High Court Justice Sean Ryan that has released the 2,600-page report, which capped a nine-year investigation.

It reinforces the conclusions many have come to in the United States especially since 2002; that the problems of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church have been both systemic and endemic over decades and generations in countries around the world.

It is not an American problem as some cardinals and highly placed Vatican officials argued a few years back. Neither is it caused by the presence of homosexually orientated men in the priesthood.

It is not a conspiracy by the newspapers in the United States or by anybody to bankrupt the institutional church.

It is not the “Know Nothings” of an earlier era in the United States.

It comes from within the institution not from the outside. The institution, the Roman Catholic Church as we know it, has done it to itself.

Clericalism is the all encompassing problem in the church today, that widespread abuse of authority, that lack of accountability and transparency which the United States bishops promised in 2002 but which they have been short on delivering since and should have been practicing all along the line anyway.

The all encompassing mantra that allowed, permitted and enabled this horror to happen, was and is the widespread abuse of power and authority in the Roman Catholic Church starting at the highest levels. It can be seen in the reports and documents coming out of the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts in 2002, in dioceses in California like the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and in investigations and reports like the Grand Jury Report on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 2005.

This is why in Delaware we removed all statutes of limitation regarding the sexual abuse of children with the signing of the 2007 Child Victims Law which includes a two year civil window for bringing forward previously time barred cases of sexual abuse by anyone, if it happened in Delaware.

New Yorkers of all religious stripes and none are well advised to support the Markey/Duane bill on the sexual abuse of children. It is unconscionable for the Archdiocese of New York and the New York Catholic Conference to be opposing accountability and transparency in regard to childhood sexual abuse.

The Irish Report was done by governmental authorities unlike the 2004 report in the United States which was commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and for that reason its figures especially should be considered suspect.

It is unconscionable that the Irish government actually made a deal with the institutional church to allow no prosecutions for these heinous crimes against humanity. It is equally despicable that the religious order known as the Christian Brothers brought suit and barred the release of any names of any of these known sexually predatory priests to the public.

It is immaterial whether they are living or dead. If the Christian Brothers religious community knew them to be credibly accused, if they had records in church files of these individuals molesting others over the years they should have made these names public for the physical, spiritual and psychological well being of those who were abused, raped, sodomized, etc.

How could they not think of the children before all else?

How could the institutional Roman Catholic Church think of the children before all else?

Sodom and Gomorrah suggest anything?

These crimes against children are in direct violation of and in contradiction to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child to which the Holy See was an original signatory, notwithstanding the fact that no periodic compliance reports have ever been submitted by the Holy See.

Might this suggest a course of action?

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