

Evidence

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1. To what extent have any of the following issues contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions or affected the institutional response to this abuse?

a. the Catholic Church's structure and governance, including the role of the Vatican / b. issues related to the individual leadership of Catholic institutions /c. clericalism

The Interplay of Power and Powerlessness

I am responding to these three issues together in relation to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions which I will call 'The Interplay of Power and Powerlessness'

One issue that marked the biographies of the clerical men who had abused minors and who participated in my research centres on the interplay of power and powerlessness. Essentially, the structural contradictions of their clerical lives kept them inherently powerless while at the same time set them above other non-ordained or non-vowed men and women. While formation and the structure of clerical life kept them sexually and relationally immature, ordination and sacred consecration set them apart as elite, superior to other men.

At ordination, a priest's hands and his whole being are made sacred and he is conferred with extraordinary powers to administer the sacraments, transform lives and absolve sin in the name of the Church – powers that belong to him alone as a priest¹. For vowed non-ordained religious, whilst the same sacred powers are not bestowed at consecration, the sense of sacredness of the chosen life comes from the idea that they have been "called" by God for this sacred role.

In a programme on ABC National Radio in Australia², the following extract from a book on priesthood published in 2008 and written by Bishop Porteous, an Australian bishop and until 2008 Rector of an Australian Seminary in Sydney, illustrates succinctly the point I wish to make. Bishop Porteous describes the changes that occur at ordination:

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1544–1568, 345–351. See also M. Gordon, "The Priestly Phallus. A Study in Iconography," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 5/1 (2004) 103–111, at 105.

² "Background Briefing," ABC National Radio, Australia (broadcast 7 March 2010), available at <<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/backgroundbriefing>> [accessed 14 March 2010].

A man once ordained is ontologically changed. He is a priest. Something mysterious happens. It is an action of grace, and something quite real ... The priesthood is not just the deputing of an individual to take on a particular role. It is more than a function; it is a radical reorienting of the whole reality of the person. He is changed at the level of his being ... Ordination is not just the power to exercise the priestly office in the Church; it is such a transformation of the person that a distinctly priestly character can be identified in him³.

According to this theology of priesthood, which can also be seen in the writings of John Paul II and Benedict XVI⁴, the priest is not alone an instrument of God, nor a minister of the sacraments; he is essentially changed by virtue of ordination. He acts *in persona Christi*, not as a mere instrument of Christ's work but rather as Christ's real image and representative⁵.

Influenced by this theology of priesthood, it is little wonder that priesthood was construed by clergy and laity alike as a personal gift and a permanent sacred calling, rather than a gift of service to the community. It is also little wonder that a corrosive culture of clericalism was to be borne from such a theology, which was to effect clergy and laity alike. I am coming to the view that the idea of ontological change, which is associated with a particular theology of priesthood, not alone set otherwise healthy men (who had chosen a life of priestly and consecrated service) apart from ordinary men in an unhealthy manner, but also breath a culture of clericalism that has been part of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic

³ J. Porteous, *After the Heart of God: The Life and Ministry of Priests at the Beginning of the Third Millennium*. (Ballan, Australia: Connor Court Publishing, 2008).

⁴ 15 D. Donovan, "Fr. Daniel Donovan Reviews Bishop Julian Porteous' Book on Priest and Priesthood" (2009), available at <http://www.catholica.com.au/gc2/dd/016_dd_271009.php> [accessed 1 March 2011].

⁵ F. Ryan, "Images of God, Images of Priesthood," paper presented at *Church: A Culture of Abusive Relationships?* Conference organised by Irish Theological Association in All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin (18–19 March 2011). A version of this paper is also published as: "Images of God, Images of Priest: What is the Crisis?" *Doctrine and Life* 61/6 (July-August 2011) 28–45. See also E. Conway, "Operative Theologies of Priesthood: Have They Contributed to Child Sexual Abuse?" in R. Ammicht-Quinn, H. Haker and M. Junker-Kenny (eds.), *The Structural Betrayal of Trust. Concilium* (London: SCM Press, 2004/3) 72–86.

Church. Although the standard word on the topic from theological and ecclesiological scholars accepts that several models of Church are currently in operation, in my view one has been fostered by several recent papacies based on the notion of clergy as elite. Far from Baptism bestowing equality as the rite of passage and as the vision, this ecclesiology gives rise to a dual model of Church in which the Church of the clergy is superior and more “holy” when compared with the Church of the laity. This version of Church can be seen as creating part of the climate in which the sexual abuse of minors became possible in the first instance and in which it remained undetected for far too long.

Emerging from Irish seminaries in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it is no surprise that generations of otherwise disempowered and immature seminarians became convinced that they were set apart and set above the Catholic laity by virtue of ordination. It is no surprise either that, despite intentionality and the theological acceptance of a pluralism of models in practice, generations of clergy and of Irish Catholic laity subscribed to a model of Church in which the institutional dichotomy between clergy and laity was effectively insurmountable. Even the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), which tried to humanise many aspects of the Roman Catholic Church, did not resolve many of the contradictions and dilemmas inherent in that Church, and even its attempts to chart a new theology of priesthood were not quite successful. While the messages of the Council led priests and religious to an understanding that their lives must no longer be devoid of intimacy, little guidance was offered in seminaries or in clerical life as to how such intimacy was to be achieved, or how appropriate professional boundaries were to be developed within the new atmosphere of emotional intimacy. In addition, my research suggests that Catholic seminarians of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s had little training on the parameters of power and how to exercise power appropriately, while operating in a position of power as adult men and as ministers of the Catholic Church. Instead, their training had taught them to think of power in one direction only – upwards. Within such a context, boundary violations, including sexual violations, were inevitable.

In relation to the clerical men who perpetrated abuse, my research suggests that the men had a diminished sense of authority and autonomy in the personal sphere that overshadowed much of their conscious awareness of their power as adult men and as Church ministers. In other words, the men appeared to have little real awareness of the power context from which and in which they operated. Their primary pre-occupation with power was on obedience to

bishops and Church leaders and superiors. They were also concerned about Church rules and regulations. The participants in my research were concerned about the people who had authority and power *over* them and less about those who were structurally subordinated to them in the Catholic Church – the laity, and within that, children and vulnerable adults. The participants in my research had little training in how authority should be exercised by them in their ministries, the obligations that accompany such power and authority, and the moral limits to its uses⁶.

To be sure, the men knew they could call children at will from classrooms or other venues and that the child would have no option but to come. However, at the level of the sexual and the emotional, their narratives paradoxically indicate that they saw children and young people as potential “friends” and “equals.” In a manner that might be difficult for many adults to comprehend, the clerical perpetrators did not countenance adequately the power imbalances that were involved in their “relationships” and “friendships” with children and young people. Their principal preoccupation was one of personal and individualised inner conflict and distress, mainly related to celibacy, sexuality and inner emotional turmoil and frustration. Many of the men did not feel powerful, despite the power positions they occupied in the communities in which they worked and in the minds of the Irish laity.

It does not appear to be the case that the abuse perpetrated by these men was about gaining power *over* the victims in order to feel powerful. Rather, their abusive behaviour was more likely to have its genesis in other factors: their interpretation of “friendship”; their blindness to their power position in Irish society, especially in the sexual, emotional and moral sphere; their preoccupation with Church rules and regulations; their fear of Church leaders and those in authority; their lack of empathy to childhood sexual vulnerability; and their own sexual and emotional immaturity and loneliness.

In these circumstances, children and young people can be recast as the receptors for adults’ needs and feelings. The clerical perpetrators lived out of an unreflective script of private powerlessness whilst ministering in a site of unsupervised and unchallenged public dominance. This paradox is at the core of their sexual offending. A feeling of private powerlessness that eclipsed an awareness of the power context, from which and in which they

⁶ E. Hill, “Obedience, Authority and Responsibility,” *Doctrine and Life* 47/3 (March 1997) 155–159.

operated as adult males and as ministers of the Catholic Church, became a deadly combination of circumstances that resulted in the sexual abuse of minors. This is at the heart of the abuse problem for the Roman Catholic Church. The picture of power relations is, therefore, a complex one. The clerical perpetrators were both powerful and powerless, and it is this constellation, rather than their power position *per se*, that is seen as contributing to their sexual offending.

Whilst no excuses can be made for their sexual offending, in attempting to explain their actions at the level of power, I have come to the following conclusion: their experiences of powerlessness in the private sphere combined with their idea of power as accountability upwards, were devoid of facilitated introspection, as they were left unsupervised, unsupported and unchallenged to minister in a site of unregulated public power. It is this dynamic of power/powerlessness that is implicated in their sexual offending. In such circumstances, the sexual abuse of children in the private realm functioned to preserve the priesthood in the public sphere – that is, as long as the secrecy was maintained.

Other features that are important in understanding the conditions of the lives of the clerical perpetrators are over-identification with the clerical role, the failure of moral theology to enable good moral judgement, and emotional loneliness and emotional isolation I have elaborated in depth in my book *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power and Organizational Culture* (2012)⁷.

d. mandatory celibacy

This section I call the Theology of Sexuality which includes Mandatory Celibacy as it contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions.

The Theology of Sexuality

Maleness is a primary requirement for priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church; yet male sexual identity cannot be evident in actual experience⁸. Since the Council of Trent (1545–1563), a manualised approach to clerical sexual expression has dominated Catholic moral

⁷ See Keenan, M (2012). *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church*. New York: Oxford University Press

⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1994) § 1577, 353.

thought, based on a series of moral rules and regulations. At ordination and sacred consecration, priests and male religious vow to act out a maleness in which sexual activity is eliminated altogether and sexual desire is sublimated.

In proposing such an approach to clerical sexual ethics, which I believe to be part of the current crisis for the Catholic Church, insufficient help was given to generations of clergy who attempted, and in many cases failed, to live according to such moral norms; a fact that Pope Benedict XVI himself came to accept⁹. In effect, attempts to control sexual desire and sexual activity in my view led to sex-obsessed lives of terror, in which the body was disavowed, sexual desire was a problem to be overcome and the moral superiority of vowed virginity was presumed.

Whilst it is clear that some men can grow to mature manhood and have fulfilling lives without fathering children and without sexual engagement, others cannot. For some men, the loss of that opportunity is problematic, especially if the loss is in part imposed. Despite this knowing, celibacy was rarely conceptualised in seminary formation as a significant human loss, but rather as a “gift” or “sacrifice.” Celibacy is largely presented in religious or spiritual terms (at least it was in the past). A theology of sacrifice eclipsed all human considerations when it came to this matter. A de-gendered version of Christ Jesus and a sanitised version of Christian history was invoked, based on a reading of Scripture which was presented as “truth,” rather than a symbolic account that offers multiple interpretations.

Clerical men and vowed religious who are fortunate enough to have been formed in more enlightened theology and who have sufficient insight to mourn the loss of male sexual intimacy and of a potential family, adapt and redirect their generative strivings into productive lives, including those to protect and watch over the young and vulnerable¹⁰. Psycho-sexual maturity and adequate relational support facilitate this process. However, other clergy neither achieved such psycho-sexual maturity nor had adequate relational support to live emotionally and sexually healthy lives. Clerics and former clerics have told me that

⁹ P. Seewald, *Benedict XVI. Light of the World: The Pope, the Church and the Signs of the Times. A Conversation with Peter Seewald*, trans. Michael Miller and Adrian Walker (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010) 32.

¹⁰ M. G. Frawley-O’Dea, “Psychosocial Anatomy of the Catholic Sexual Abuse Scandal,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 5/2 (2004) 121–137, at 132.

many of their contemporaries drank or drink heavily to compensate, others gambled, others used their power “to lord it over people,” and many engaged in physical relationships with “consenting” adult ... these ways of coping to my mind continue. We now have advances in the internet and technology for deviant sexual purposes too which has not escaped the clergy.

The clerical perpetrators who participated in my research could not openly acknowledge the reality of their sexual lives and losses, even long before they had begun to abuse boys and/or girls. Nor could they deal appropriately with the losses that clerical life would bring. Rather, these men continually sought that which they could not have, attempting to sublimate and deny sexual desire, control sexual expression and live emotionally lonely lives.

My research suggests that while celibacy is not the problem that gives rise to sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy, a Catholic sexual ethic and theology of priesthood, which problematises the body and erotic sexual desire and emphasises chastity and purity over a relational ethic as the model for living, may be. When one adds the practices of self - flagellation into this mix, practices which mark the biographies of some of the participants in my research, at least in the early part of their clerical and religious lives, the unhealthy disregard for the mortified and sacrificed body that emerges from these, and many other clerical narratives, begs an important question: not why so many Catholic clergy sexually acted out in the way that they did, but rather why more did not? The theology of sexuality, which contributes to self-hatred and shame, needs serious theological examination and revision.

e. selection, screening, training and ongoing formation of candidates for the priesthood and religious life

Sometimes the question is raised why individuals with a disposition to prey sexually upon minors gain admission to the priesthood and why they are not weaned out before they infiltrate the organization. Examined closely this question suggests a number of assumptions: that priests and religious who come to be accused of the sexual abuse of children have a predisposition to do so, that such inclinations can be discerned at the point of entry to the seminary or while they are seminarians and that some men become priests and religious in order to gain access to children to abuse. By implication the assumption is that the sexual abuse of a child by Catholic clergy is the result of individual pathology or predisposition – a theory that is favoured by some men in leadership in the Catholic Church. The response

often suggests the need for better screening for clergy at the point of entry in order to pick up individuals with a disordered psychological state.

Whilst screening the clergy might be important for a lot of reasons, the assumption that it will pick up those men who might come to be accused of the sexual abuse of children is not borne out by available research and clinical experience. My research and that presented by other clinicians and researchers (Kafka, 2004; Marshall, 2004), including the John Jay team (Terry, 2008: 567; Smith et al., 2008: 580) lead to this conclusion. The John Jay College research team (John Jay, 2004, 2006) worked hard to be able to discern the evidence of pathology or predisposition to abuse children from the data that they studied of the clergy offenders in the United States. They concluded that the data did not support the finding that most of these acts of child sexual abuse were predicated by pathology or paraphilic behaviour, such as paedophilia (Smith et al., 2008: 580; Tallon and Terry, 2008:625). Tallon and Terry (2008:625) argued that because clerical men wait several years before committing their first acts of abuse and because they do not target particular types of children (as the majority of clergy perpetrators in the John Jay Study abused victims with wider age discrepancies than 2 or more years and sometimes minors of both genders), whatever else is happening, it is not likely that most clerical abuse of children is driven by sexually arousing fantasies about prepubescent children or adolescents (which forms the basis for the definition of paedophilia). Tallon and Terry (2008: 625) found that very few priests who had sexually abused minors fit the typology of the “paedophile priest” – a typology that is favoured by the media. Even those men who initiated sexual abuse soon after ordination and whose abusive pattern spanned a long duration did not meet what could be regarded as paedophilia, as they would not have waited so long to begin their abusive ‘careers’ if they were paedophiles. Many so called paraphilic interests, such as paedophilia, are said to begin in adolescence and if these men did have a diagnosable disorder on which they would act out (if one subscribed to such diagnosis in the first instance), it would be expected that they would have done so sooner (Tallon and Terry, 2008: 626). In my own study, in which eight of the nine men abused post-pubertal males (and one also abused a female), and one abused younger male children, I reached the same conclusion, based on an analysis of the men’s narratives and of their case files. Tallon and Terry (2008: 625) also concluded that it is unlikely that clerical and religious men who have sexually abused minors have specifically chosen a profession in

the Catholic Church so that they could gain access to children to abuse. I have reached a similar conclusion (Keenan, 2006).

Several other studies have reviewed aspects of the psychological functioning of clerical men who have sexually abused minors, looking for clues to their abusive actions and decisions. Lack of intimacy and emotional loneliness is considered important by a number of clinicians and researchers (Loftus and Camargo, 1993: 292; Sipe, 1995; Loftus, 1999; Kennedy, 2001). Depression and difficulty expressing emotional concerns is seen as important by others (Plante, Manuel and Bryant, 1996: 135; Robinson, 1994: 365). Whilst McGlone (2001: 88) found that 59% of non-offending or 'normal' clergy identified themselves as having received some form of psychological treatment or counselling, mainly relating to depression, sexual orientation, sexual identity issues and alcoholism, Flakenhain et al., (1999:330) indicated that only 1.8% - 2.5% of sexually offending clergy ever sought psychological help prior to treatment for their sexual offending. Clergy who were identified as child sexual offenders simply did not seek help for their sexual and emotional problems. This is also something that emerges in my own research.

Anger and over-controlled hostility was also reported as part of the profile of clerical men who have sexually abused minors (Plante, Manuel and Bryant, 1996: 135). A style of relating that tended towards passivity and conformity, and in some instances a tendency towards shyness is also reported in some of these studies (Rossetti, 1994:4; Loftus and Camargo 1993: 292). Anger was also implicated in the offending of the men who participated in my own research – anger that came from a lifetime of submission and attempts at living a life that was impossible to live. My research suggests that the practices of obedience and the absence of personal autonomy in clerical and religious life must be considered significant in the sexual offending of Roman Catholic clergy – especially if obedience becomes an instrument of oppression in the hands of Church leaders who work in a spirit of power and control rather than a spirit of guiding leadership.

Some studies found that ignorance of sexual matters (Loftus and Camargo, 1993: 292), lack of knowledge of the basic physiology of sexuality and of the emotional responses in sexually charged situations (Loftus and Camargo, 1993: 300) and what is described as sexual and emotional underdevelopment (Flakenhain et al., 1999: 331) were all found in sexually offending Catholic clergy. However, Loftus and Camargo (1993: 292) also found that all groups of clergy attending a treatment centre in Canada for a range of issues were ignorant of sexual matters and not just those who had abused minors.

Several studies have reported that clergy who have sexually abused minors have experienced sexual abuse themselves in childhood, sometimes by another priest or religious (Robinson, Montana and Thompson, 1993 (66%); Connors (1994) (30%-35%); Sipe (1995) (70%-80%); Valcour (1990: 49) (33%-50%)). This is also the case in my own research in which six of the nine participants reported a history of sexual abuse; five in childhood and one man was abused in the seminary. This is an important finding and although sexual abuse in childhood can never be accepted as an excuse for sexual offending in adulthood, and many people who experience childhood sexual abuse never abuse anyone, it is important that many clergy who had experienced sexual abuse in childhood had never discussed these experiences until they were in treatment for sexual offending. Perrillo et al., (2008: 611) who analysed the John Jay data to try to understand repeatⁱ offending by Catholic clergy found that a history of childhood sexual victimization was found to be one of the strongest predictive variables for clerical men to become repeat offenders. This is an important observation as there is not overall support for this finding in the general literature on other child sexual offenders (Hanson et al., 1993; Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2004, 2005). Priests and religious who have experienced childhood sexual abuse may be different in this regard. Priests who had experienced childhood sexual abuse were seen as particularly at risk for subsequent sexual offending against minors in the John Jay study and my own research has pointed to the role of childhood experiences of sexual abuse in the sexual offending histories of five of the men who took part in my research.

The implication of the fact that five of the men in my study had experienced sexual abuse in childhood and had experienced shame as a result is that they entered priesthood and religious life with feelings of shame and fear of speaking about their experiences. As in many

situations involving child sexual abuse, the men in my study were drawn into secrets by their abusers, leading them to assume responsibility for the sexual ‘relationship’. They believed themselves to be complicit in what was happening and therefore equally culpable. The main reason given by the men for the non-disclosure of their childhood sexual abuse was their conflicted understanding of what was happening to them. The men stated that they normalised the experience when they were children, especially if they knew the same thing was happening to other boys in school. They believed that the sexual abuse did not cause them harm, but that it reflected negatively on them and therefore it had to be kept as a ‘shameful secret’. However four of the five men who experienced sexual abuse in childhood subsequently abused boys using exactly the same techniques as those employed by their own abuser. The shame that the men lived with was likely to present problems for them in their priestly and religious lives, if not attended to, given that the life of the priest or religious would give them access to the most intimate and vulnerable spheres of other people’s lives. Two men, whose motivation for priesthood was in part an attempt to avoid sexuality altogether, following a history of childhood sexual abuse, also needed to explore these issues during the course of their formation, as their experience of life would show, avoiding sexuality altogether was an unrealistic aspiration. Unfortunately for the participants in my research, their experiences of childhood sexual abuse were not discussed during their time in formation for priestly or religious life – neither they nor anybody else mentioned it.

f. support for and supervision of working priests and religious

g. the operation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

The men in my research used the sacrament of reconciliation to seek forgiveness, resolve never to do this bad thing again and in some cases to ease their conscience. I have written at length about this in *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender Power and Organizational Culture* (2012).

h. individual psycho-sexual factors

Another issue that is often raised in relation to clerical men who have sexually abused minors relates to the question of homosexuality. Is the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy the

result of the ordination of men of a homosexual orientation? On closer examination this question assumes that homosexuality *per se* is responsible for the sexual abuse of minors by Roman Catholic clergy. However, this is not seen to be the case by much research on the subject. McGlone (2002) suggests that 46%-66% of Roman Catholic clergy who sexually abuse children and young people are of a homosexual or bisexual orientation. However, there is no evidence that sexual identity and sexually abusive behaviour have the same origins and whilst the majority of priests and religious have abused adolescent males, the picture does not represent a simple linear trajectory from child sexual abuse of males to homosexuality, or the other way round. In the general child sexual offender field, adult heterosexuality is still reported as the predominant sexual orientation of men who sexually abuse pre-pubertal children, both males and females, whilst adult males who abuse adolescent males are much more likely to be men of a homosexual orientation (Marshall, 1988: 383-391; Langevin, 2000: 537). However, it is not simply the case of heterosexual men abusing pre-pubertal girls and homosexual men abusing boys as heterosexual men also sexually abuse pre-pubertal boys and indeed these data may not be relevant anyway for clergy men who represent a distinct group (Marshall, 2004; Kafka, 2004; Terry, 2008).

Seven of the nine men who participated in my own research were men of a homosexual orientation. Their narratives suggest that for all of them their difficulties in coping with celibacy and sexuality were compounded by a denial and fear of their homosexuality. Without institutional support the project of constructing the 'clergy' man as a 'gay' man was a concealed affair and an individual and isolated journey. The religious and cultural mores of their day made acknowledging homosexuality something the men could not contemplate. Whilst this situation created significant intra-personal conflicts for them, there is no suggestion by the men that their homosexuality 'caused' them to sexually abuse minors, even in situations where they abused adolescent males. The analysis of their narratives suggests that aspects of their concealed sexuality and struggles with celibacy and emotional loneliness, and not sexual orientation *per se*, must be considered significant for their sexual offending. My research suggests that the challenges of celibacy were no greater or less for men of a homosexual orientation than they were for heterosexual men, and concealment of sexual desire was evident for all men, regardless of sexual orientation. The fear of unmasking was,

however, a constant fear for men of a homosexual orientation, and their identity and self-confidence was severely constrained by such fear.

The existing literature on sexual abuse by Catholic clergy does not give enough prominence to the distinctly important issue of what might be referred to as homophobic tendencies within the Catholic Church and how this disables the development of human sexuality and the natural expression of sexual desire and relationship. This is of particular relevance since what could be regarded as ‘homophobia’, certainly seeing homosexuality as dysfunction, is institutionalised by the Catholic Church and to some extent supported by social structures. Homophobia is a particular feature of male gender socialisation and sexual identity and is a central aspect of a complex range of internalised and externalised male behaviours. This is ever more so for a group of men who are socialised together into a life of celibate living in an all-male institutional environment.

The relevance of homophobia in the response of the Catholic Church to clergy sexual abuse cannot be over-emphasised, and in my book I give this issue due attention. In particular I am concerned about the hegemony of hetero-normative culture and the spiritual and emotional ‘violence’ experienced by clergy men in their development, largely perpetrated by a homophobic culture that is rigidly articulated – even today – through aspects of the Catholic Church hierarchy. The proclamations by the Catholic Church in the 1990s, which essentially linked child sexual abuse by clergy to the issue of homosexuality, are fundamentally flawed and have no basis in empirical or respectable research, scientific knowledge, common social mores or a theology of justice. Indeed, this misinformation and the frequency of homophobic condemnation by Church hierarchy contribute significantly to an obfuscation of the facts about child sexual abuse and human sexuality and *de facto* to opportunities for the recurrence of abusive behaviours.

Something that is not much reported in the literature on clerical men who have sexually abused minors but that I found in my own research relates to the role of fear. It is apparent from an analysis of the men’s narratives that the participants in my study constructed their priestly or religious vocation on fear—fear of breaking their celibate commitment and fear of displeasing others (particularly those in authority). For these men the resultant way of ‘doing’ priesthood involved strategies such as adopting a submissive way

of relating to others, avoiding relationships with women and avoiding particular friendships with men. In essence, these men avoided intimacy. Such strategies produced poor adult attachments, a fear of emotional and physical intimacy and prolonged emotional loneliness. Although three of the men in my study said that they learned their initial fear of displeasing others and of emotional disclosure in their families of origin and two of the men believe that they developed these patterns in response to childhood experiences of sexual abuse, all of the men believed that these problems were compounded by their experiences of seminary life and during their time in formation.

2. To what extent has the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions been a result of the failings of the individuals who committed the abuse?

To what extent have systemic institutional factors including structure, governance and culture contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions?

Based on an analysis of the literature on ‘normal’ and offending clergy and my own research on this subject my conclusion is that individual pathology is insufficient to explain sexual offending by Roman Catholic clergy and alternative interpretations must be explored. When comparing clergy offenders with non-clergy offenders a similar conclusion is reached. The broad consensus in the psychological literature is that Roman Catholic clergy sexual offenders represent an atypical group of child sexual offenders (Kafka, 2004: 49; Marshall, 2003) and that situational and contextual factors must be considered significant in their sexual offending (Marshall, 2003; Brenneis, 2001: 25; Tallon and Terry, 2008: 627). Following her exhaustive analysis of all of the available data in relation to sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy in the United States, Terry (2008: 567) concluded “There is little information that relates to identifiable pathologies of the offender (e.g., clear indications of paedophilia), and there is much information that indicates an opportunistic selection effect. Although the majority of victims were male, it is the group of children [and young people] to whom the priests had the most (and unrestricted) access”. As the kind of access that clergy are given is a product of their institutional identity and the kind of safety that their roles suggest comes to them from the authority of the institution, it is important for the institution to examine itself to see what in its structure and history have contributed to this problem (Gordon, 2004: 110). At the same time, although access and opportunity are very important, my own research suggests that to see sexual abuse of minors as a problem of access and

opportunity alone is to simplify what is a much more complex issue. Many clergy men who have unrestricted access to minors never sexually abuse anyone.

In order to understand clerical men who have sexually abused minors, one can come to no other conclusion but that their sexual offending must be understood within the unique context of their lives and ministries as Roman Catholic ministers within the Roman Catholic Church. In the general literature a number of institutional aspects of the Roman Catholic Church are seen as creating a climate in which child sexual abuse by Catholic clergy becomes possible, but an analysis of exactly how these factors contribute to the problem and in what ways I have fully articulated in Keenan (2012). The features of the institutional church that are said to contribute to a climate in which sexual abuse by Catholic clergy becomes possible includes the theology of sexuality, the ecclesiastical structure of power relations and hierarchical authority, clerical culture and seminary formation. These aspects of the institution are influenced in turn by its traditions and teachings that are seen by some scholars to have rendered sexual abuse by clergy and the subsequent responses of the Catholic hierarchy almost inevitable (Frawley-O’Dea, 2004; Kung, 2003; Berry, 1992; Sipe, 1995; Cozzens, 2004; Papesh, 2004; Ranson, 2002a, 2002b; Dokecki, 2004; Oakley and Russett, 2004; Doyle, 2003, 2004; Gordon, 2004; Celenza, 2004). What is important here is the interrelationship between the forces of sexuality, power and power relations, governance structures and clerical culture and their enabling and constraining powers and potentialities on the lives of those men who became the clergy perpetrators, those men who became the Church hierarchy and those men who are regarded as ‘normal’ clergyⁱⁱ. Whilst many within the leadership of the Catholic Church prefer to operate outside of conscious awareness of this fact and prefer to think in terms of individual pathology rather than systemic breakdown, the evidence seems to point otherwise (White and Terry, 2008; Keenan 2012). In addition, a Church and social culture that prefers to focus blame on individuals – those men who have abused minors and those Church leaders who are seen to have failed in their duties in the handling of abuse complaints - may do well to think again – and keep the institutional dimensions of the aetiology of the problem in focus, as well as the manner in which the problem is currently constructed in popular discourse. This is not to say that individuals are not responsible for the actions they take, but it is to point to the fact that in trying to understand the problem (and presumably seek solutions) an approach that merely focuses on the individuals who have been ‘named and shamed’ is to fail in a way that is regrettable. An

approach to the problem that merely focuses on the ‘named and the shamed’ will keep the institutional aspects of the problem in play, aspects that will contribute to additional human problems, if not to further abuse of minors. As the identity of the clerical male takes its shape from the institution of the Roman Catholic Church, breaching the boundaries of his identity (as in the case of the clergy perpetrators) or working for the best interest of the Church (as in the case of Church leaders who are said to have failed in the handling of abuse complaints) is, therefore, an institutional issue.

3. To what extent have any inadequacies in the institutional response to child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions been a result of the failings of responsible individuals?

To what extent have systemic institutional factors including structure, governance and culture affected the institutional response to child sexual abuse by Catholic Church authorities?

ⁱ Repeat offending is seen as similar to recidivism in the John Jay study, although I would argue that it is different. Most research on repeat sexual offending focuses on recidivism – a form of repeat offending in which additional acts of sexual abuse occur after some form of correctional intervention, such as incarceration or participation in a treatment programme. Some studies define recidivism as a new charge whilst others define it as a new conviction. Whatever the case, the idea of recidivism is that an offender has reoffended following an intervention. The John Jay team interpret the reporting of the allegation as an intervention for the purposes of their analysis of repeat offending whereas my understanding of recidivism is that the intervention must be of a significant magnitude involving apprehension or treatment.

ⁱⁱ These issues are fully explored in Keenan (2012).