

“FATHER FORGIVE ME FOR I HAVE SINNED”:
STRATEGIES OF APOLOGIA USED BY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
ADDRESSING THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

A Thesis

by

CHERYL ELAINE LOZANO-WHITTEN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

May 2010

Major Subject: Communication

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Catholic Church in Addressing the Sexual Abuse Crisis

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ABSTRACT

“Father Forgive Me for I Have Sinned”: Strategies of Apologia Used by the Roman Catholic Church in Addressing the Sexual Abuse Crisis.

(May 2010)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. James Arnt Aune

The sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy has overwhelmed public media and has resulted in a barrage of criminal and civil lawsuits. Between October of 1985 and November of 2002, more than three-hundred and ninety-four media sources reported on allegations of sexual misconduct worldwide. The response by the hierarchy of the church has been defensive with little effort in expressing remorse.

Researchers over the past decade have focused much attention on how organizations respond to crises involving allegations of wrongdoing, but little attention to the church as an organization remains under-researched. When an organization suffers such a crisis as did the Catholic Church regarding the sexual abuse of its members, the role of apology takes on various viewpoints.

The questions posed for this research are: First, what strategies of apology did the Catholic Church use in addressing the sexual abuse by clergy and were the apologies issued apologies of regret or remorse. Secondly, I want to explore the impact the media has had on the church. Finally I want to explore the status of the church today with

regard to legal issues and the effect the statute of limitations is having on the victims being compensated.

The apologies issued on behalf of the Church were few and far between. Based on the analysis of articles from the *Boston Globe*, it appears that the Church apologized as more of regret than remorse. The silence and cover-up by leaders in the Church forced the hand of many victims to speak out about the abuse and confront the Church in the only way they would respond . . . in a court of law. Once the accusations became public, the media played a pivotal role in escalating the crisis, thereby, forcing the hand of the Church in addressing the abuse.

Taking responsibility for the actions of clergy from the very beginning would have been the responsible thing for the Church to do.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to first and foremost my husband, Glen. He has supported me constantly. The sacrifices he made on my behalf are many and I love him very much. I would also like to thank my daughters, Sarah Sandling, Katherine Woods, and Ellen Whitten as well as my grandsons, Julian Sandling and Eli Woods. If not for their constant support and encouragement, I would not have been able to accomplish this goal. I love you all very much.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy has overwhelmed public media and has resulted in a barrage of criminal and civil lawsuits. Between October of 1985 and November of 2002, more than three-hundred and ninety-four media sources reported on allegations of sexual misconduct in the Roman Catholic Church worldwide. The response by the hierarchy of the church has been defensive with little effort in expressing remorse.

Although apologies issued by the Pontiff on behalf of the Catholic Church have been few, there have been several occasions when public apologies have been issued. On March 12th, 2000, Pope John Paul II offered an apology seeking repentance for sins that may have been committed over the past two-thousand years in the name of the church. The request for forgiveness which included seven general categories, ranged from the Crusades to the Inquisition, sins against women and anti-Jewish acts. This was the first for the Catholic Church, which rarely admits to misdeeds of the past. His Holiness said, “We humbly ask for forgiveness for the part that each of us with his or her behaviors has played in such evils thus contributing to disrupting the face of the church. At the same time, as we confess our sins let us forgive the faults committed by others towards us.”¹

This thesis follows the style of *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*.

Yet again, on November 22nd, 2001, Pope John Paul II offered an apology for the sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy after reports that priests and missionaries forced nuns to have sex with them and in some instances committed rape and instructed them to have abortions. According to an article by Richard Boudreaux of the *Los Angeles Times*, the Pontiff said, “sexual abuse by some clergy and religious has caused great suffering and spiritual harm to the victims. It has been very damaging in the life of the church.”²

The most recent apology was given by Pope Benedict XVI on July 19th, 2008 in Sydney, Australia at St. Mary’s Cathedral addressing the victims of child sexual abuse. He said, “Here I would like to pause to acknowledge the shame which we have all felt as a result of the sexual abuse of minors by some clergy and religious in this (Australia) country. I am deeply sorry for the pain and suffering the victims have endured and I assure them that, as their pastor, I too share in their suffering.”³

The victims of the clergy sexual abuse complained that the leadership in the Catholic Church has failed in their response to address the issues of the sexual abuse. It was the 1985 conviction of Louisiana priest Reverend Gilbert Gauthier on twelve counts of child molestation that opened the door on priests sexually abusing children. Until 2002, the only mainstream media attention dedicated to the issue of sexual abuse in the church was a CNN special done in 1993. It wasn’t until the *Boston Globe* article that disclosed church officials had re-assigned Father John Goeghan after he was accused of sexually molesting more than one-hundred and fifty victims in various Massachusetts parishes over a thirty year period that became the catalyst for other reports of sexual abuse and cover-ups by church officials.

Research Questions

Researchers over the past decade have focused much attention on how organizations respond to crises involving allegations of wrongdoing, but little attention to the church as an organization remains under-researched. The Roman Catholic Church is an organization that has one leader (the Pope), over three thousand bishops, approximately two hundred and twenty thousand priests, and one billion Catholics world-wide, sixty-five million of which are Americans. When an organization suffers such a crisis as did the Catholic Church regarding the sexual abuse of its members, the role of apology takes on various viewpoints. “In their comprehensive work on the organization in crisis, Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer posit that most organizational rhetorical discourse is examined from the genre of apologia. They surmise that the abundant use of apologia in crisis discourse results from the assumption that there are two goals for the corporate organization in crisis: to respond to accusations of wrongdoing and to repair image which serves to fulfill a desire to return to profitability and secure market share.”⁴

The questions posed for this research are: First, what strategies of apology did the Catholic Church use in addressing the sexual abuse by clergy, specifically in the Archdiocese of Boston. Secondly, I want to explore the disconnection between the apologies and the effort of the Church to enact legislation designed to shorten the statute of limitations on claims. Answers to these questions as well as others take on a variety of issues, such as the effect that this scandal has had on Catholics in general and more specifically the effects this crisis has had on the clergy themselves. This research is

important for a number of reasons. We, as Catholics, put our faith and our religious clergy on a pedestal. The scandal has not only knocked them off the pedestal, it has tarnished our image of what being a Catholic means. It is my goal then to understand the significance of this crisis and where as a church we go from here.

Allegations of sexual abuse of children have been made against the Roman Catholic priests as well as other clergy dating back to the late 1960's. Allegations of both physical and sexual abuse of more than three hundred former pupils from the Congregation of Christian Brothers in Newfoundland began to surface. A financial settlement was reached for twenty-three million dollars for former students who alleged abuse. In March 1998, the Congregation published full page advertisements apologizing to those victims. Stories of abuse became all too familiar throughout various Catholic orders around the world. Stories surfaced of a priest pretending to be a trained gynecologist so he could have intimate access to his young victims. Other stories surfaced as to the abuse in Ireland of twenty-one mentally-disabled children in a residential care facility between 1965 and 1998. The Catholic Church had allegations being exposed from all parts of the world.

It was the overwhelming cases not only across the world, but in America as well which led me to think about why this happened. What was the rhetorical response to these allegations of sexual abuse by the clergy and what is the relationship between the rhetoric and the legal actions taken on behalf of the abused. According to author William Benoit, "Human beings frequently must attempt to restore their reputations after alleged or suspected wrong-doing."⁵

Literature Review

The three areas of research proposed for this thesis are: literature on apologia, image restoration, and face-work theory. There has been much research done on all subjects which provide a nice foundation for my research. I will first begin with the literature on apologia.

Arnold and Fadely, “Sex, Sin, and Swaggart: Conflict-Management through the Rhetoric of Compliance-Gaining Apologia” (1989) argue, “Apologia is public speech used by prominent persons to repair damage done to their reputations by allegations of negative behavior. Apologia involves denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. Common tactics are absolution, vindication, explanation, or justification.”⁶

Ware and Linkugel, in their well known article, “They Spoke in Defense of Themselves” (1973) argued that “apologetical discourses constitute a distinct form of public address, a family of speeches with sufficient elements in common so as to warrant legitimate generic status.”⁷ Using the factor theory designed by Robert P. Abelson, Ware and Linkugel use certain concepts based on variables associated with apologetic discourse. These factors, according to Abelson, are identified as “modes of resolution.” They are denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. “Denial is *reformative* in the sense that such strategies do not attempt to change the audience’s meaning or affect for whatever is in question. Denial consists of the simple disavowal by the speaker of any participation in, relationship to, or positive sentiment toward whatever it is that repels the audience.”⁸ The second reformative factor apologia is bolstering. “Bolstering

refers to any rhetorical strategy which reinforces the existence of a fact, sentiments, object, or relationship. When he bolsters, a speaker attempts to identify himself with something viewed favorably by the audience.”⁹ The next two factors of apologetic discourse are differentiation and transcendence, both of which are classified as transformative. “Differentiation subsumes those strategies which serve the purpose of separating some fact, sentiment, object, or relationship from some larger context within which the audience presently views that attribute.”¹⁰ The final factor is transcendence. “This factor takes in any strategy which cognitively joins some fact, sentiment, object, or relationship with some larger context within which the audience does not presently view that attribute.”¹¹ Transcendental strategies, moves the focus away from the particulars of the event to a more abstract view for the audience. This strategy can manipulate an audience which may prove to be beneficial for the speaker.

Maybe the question is not about how we as the audience perceive the sincerity of the apology or whether we can be manipulated by the speaker but rather are we willing to accept the apology and forgive, especially when it involves clergy and sexual abuse of children. According to the article, “Clergy Apologies Following Abuse: What Makes a Difference?” Exploring Forgiveness, Apology, Responsibility-Taking, Gender, and Restoration” (2008), the authors write, “Clergy members often represent God in people’s lives in such a way that they are able to view God only through that filter. Therefore, if pastors or church representatives abuse congregants, the victims then may see God as an abuser. According to Hadman-Cromwell (1991), a victim of abuse by a pastor might experience even a permanent loss of faith in God. Therefore, violation from a clergy

member is especially destructive.”¹² It would be almost impossible to forgive for such a heinous violation. In this situation, the apology, whether it be genuine or not, would not even be recognized.

Ohbuchi, Kameda, and Agarie (1989) found apology mediates aggression and revenge-taking in the victim. In a series of studies to determine the effects of various types of apologies on their recipients, Bennett and Dewberry (1994) found people might feel constrained to accept an apology even if they would rather not and even if the apology is weak. Furthermore, people had better opinions of those who accepted apologies than of those who did not. Hence, apologies may serve more of a social function than an interpersonal one.¹³

When one apologizes for something they are accepting responsibility for their actions or the actions of those the apology represents. “Accepting responsibility is the centerpiece of an apology and makes it the most expensive response financially for an organization (Fuchs-Burnett, 2002; Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Tyler, 1997). When an organization offers an apology it opens itself to lawsuits and financial loss. The apology is used as evidence in court to win lawsuits against the organization. However, some evidence indicates that compensation and sympathy, two less expensive strategies, are as effective as an apology in shaping people’s perceptions of the organization taking responsibility for the crisis because these strategies focus on victims’ needs.”¹⁴

Image is another important factor in apologetic discourse. According to author William L. Benoit,

. . . Human beings engage in recurrent patterns of communicative behavior designed to reduce, redress, or avoid damage to their reputation (or face or image) from perceived wrong-doing. Complaints are routinely leveled at people in all walks of life for all sorts of alleged misbehavior; accordingly, we are repeatedly faced with situations that impel us to explain or justify our behavior, to offer excuses or apologies for those aspects of our behavior that offend and provoke reproach from those around us. Our face, image, or reputation is a valuable commodity.¹⁵

On August 29th, 2005 Hurricane Katrina in what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration labeled as, “the most destructive storm ever to strike the USA.”¹⁶ President Bush did not make his first trip to the region until September 2nd, four days after the hurricane made landfall. The FEMA Director, Michael Brown’s experience included work for a horse breeders association. His ignorance as to the situation unfolding in New Orleans ultimately led to his resignation on September 12th. According to an ABC news poll, “76% of the people believed Bush should get some, a good amount, or a great deal of blame “for problems in the federal response” to Katrina.”¹⁷ It was on September 15th that President Bush responded with a televised speech live from Jackson Square in New Orleans to try and repair his image with the American people.

President Bush used three strategies in his speech that day to repair his image. They were bolstering, defeasibility, and corrective action. I would like to address these as they parallel the actions taken by the Catholic Church when addressing the sexual

abuse crisis. Seeing the President in Jackson Square, the heart of New Orleans was a deliberate effort to make a “personal” connection with the American people and his concern for the victims of Katrina. His rhetoric as in a large number of his speeches talked of him being a man of faith. “Religion refocuses attention from the destruction caused by the hurricane to a question of faith and resolve to turn this tragedy into positive moment.”¹⁸

Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost so much . . . we are seeing that same spirit – a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away.” He also goes on to say, “These trials have also reminded us that we are often stronger than we know -- with the help of grace and one another. They remind us of a hope beyond all pain and death, a God who welcomes the lost to a house not made with hands. And they remind us that we're tied together in this life, in this nation -- and that the despair of any touches us all.”¹⁹

The corrective action step of his image repair is in the middle of his speech where he discusses the steps that the federal government are already taking to not only assist the victims of Katrina but to prevent any future events of this nature.

Our first commitment is to meet the immediate needs of those who had to flee their homes and leave all their possessions behind. For these Americans, every night brings uncertainty, every day requires new courage, and in the months to come will bring more than their fair share of struggles.” He goes on to say, “Our second commitment is to help the citizens of the Gulf Coast to overcome this disaster, put their lives back together, and rebuild their communities. Along this

coast, for mile after mile, the wind and water swept the land clean. In Mississippi, many thousands of houses were damaged or destroyed. In New Orleans and surrounding parishes, more than a quarter-million houses are no longer safe to live in. Hundreds of thousands of people from across this region will need to find longer-term housing.²⁰

The final strategy used by Bush is defeasibility. By describing this crisis as “unprecedented” gave the President room for audience perception and interpretation. He is implying that this situation was immense. “I’m speaking to you from the city of New Orleans -- nearly empty, still partly under water, and waiting for life and hope to return. Eastward from Lake Pontchartrain, across the Mississippi coast, to Alabama into Florida, millions of lives were changed in a day by a cruel and wasteful storm.”²¹ He is attempting to give the audience a visual picture of the magnitude of the event. In the end, the speech did nothing for the President’s approval rating. If anything, it was worse than before. The President refused to admit any wrong-doing in his handling of the disaster, nor did he ever apologize.

Another piece of literature that focuses on image repair is that of Benoit and Brinson’s article, “Queen Elizabeth’s Image Repair Discourse: Insensitive Royal or Compassionate Queen? (1999). Diana, Princess of Wales, died tragically in an automobile accident on August 31st, 1997. The royal response to this tragedy was a brief statement issued by the family “confirming the death” of the Princess.²² British citizens were outraged at the lack of concern by the Royals. People were weeping outside the gates of Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace, and Westminster Abbey,

placing flowers, pictures, cards, candles and other mementos in honor of the Princess. The question then asked is does the Royal Family even care about the death of Princess Diana?

The more stinging rebuke, however, chastised the Queen for failing to acknowledge her subjects' overwhelming grief. Public judgments of inadequacy were stoked by several events. First, the Queen remained isolated in Balmoral Castle, Scotland, during the first several days following Diana's death, emerging only once on Sunday morning to attend church services and displaying no outward sign of grief over this tragedy.²³

The Queen finally conceded to criticism and addressed the public on September 5th, 1997. Using the same criteria as described in the above article on Bush and Hurricane Katrina, Queen Elizabeth first used the deniability strategy. This was done by giving an unprecedented speech thereby showing the public that she did care about Diana's death and the grief of the people. "First, I want to pay tribute to Diana myself. She was an exceptional and gifted human being. In good times and bad, she never lost her capacity to smile and laugh, nor to inspire others with her warmth and kindness."²⁴ She goes on to say, "I admired and respected her – for her energy and commitment to others, and especially for her devotion to her two boys."²⁵ This statement clearly showed her subjects that she did care about the Princess and that allegation of the Royal Family's insincerity is false.

Using comments such as "your queen" and "grandmother" the strategy of bolstering was then used. This gave the queen a more "humanistic" approach to her

persona. She revealed that the only reason the family had been at Balmoral Castle in Scotland was to console Diana's children. "This week at Balmoral, we have all been trying to help William and Harry come to terms with the devastating loss that they and the rest of us have suffered."²⁶ She goes on to thank the subjects on behalf of the Royal Family for the tributes of respect they have made on behalf of the fallen Princess. "This is also an opportunity for me, on behalf of my family, and especially Prince Charles and William and Harry, to thank all of you who have brought flowers, sent messages, and paid your respects in so many ways to a remarkable person."²⁷ The final strategy used was defeasibility. She explains, "We have all been trying in our different ways to cope. It is not easy to express a sense of loss, since the initial shock is often succeeded by a mixture of other feelings: disbelief, incomprehension, anger – and concern for those who remain."²⁸ The speech was one of historic precedent. She addressed the nation and gave an explanation as to why the Royal Family waited in addressing the public, but not one time did she make a public apology.

The final piece of literature to my research deals with "face-work" theory or in layman's terms, "saving-face". According to Erving Goffman, "The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself."²⁹

I had previously read some research on face-work theory and thought that this theory might be relevant to this research. I had read some of Goffman's work as well as an article written by Cocroft and Ting-Toomey on Facework in Japan and the United States. According to Cocroft and Ting-Toomey, "face is an intoxicating metaphor. It refers to a claimed sense of self-respect in a relational situation. It serves as a powerful explanatory concept for everyday communication behavior."³⁰ Face, as described by Ho (1976), is inherently social because it is dependent upon the perceptions of other people."³¹

According to Goffman, "A person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him; he cathects his face; his "feelings" become attached to it. If the encounter sustains an image of him that he has long taken for granted, he probably will have few feelings about the matter. If events establish a face for him that is better than he might have expected, he is likely to "feel good"; if his ordinary expectations are not fulfilled, one expects that he will "feel bad" or "feel hurt."³² The theory of face takes on several different attributes, according to Goffman. There are several ways to discuss face. There is "to lose face" as well as "to save face." It is these concepts of face which derived from the Chinese usage of to be in wrong face or out of face, or to be shamefaced. According to Goffman, "In our Anglo-American society, as in some others, the phrase "to lose face" seems to mean to be in wrong face, to be out of face, or to be shamefaced. The phrase "to save one's face" appears to refer to the process by which the person sustains an impression for others that

he has not lost face.”³³ It is the phrase; “to save face” that is the focus of my research. Goffman goes on in his explanation of face-work theory.

As an aspect of the social code of any social circle, one may expect to find an understanding as to how far a person should go to save his face. Once he takes on a self-image expressed through face he will be expected to live up to it. In different ways in different societies he will be required to show self-respect, abjuring certain actions because they are above or beneath him, while forcing himself to perform others even though they cost him dearly. By entering a situation in which he is given a face to maintain, a person takes on the responsibility of standing guard over the flow of events as they pass before him.³⁴

The Pope’s duty as head of the Catholic Church was to show self-respect in such a way that forced him to present a face that was not lost. It was his responsibility to address the world on behalf of all Catholics. Because of the extent of the crisis, we look at this as a potential way to minimize the crisis and not to appear to be ashamed. The actions of few and the presentation of the crisis in the media created a negative perception of what may actually have been genuine response to the problem. The Catholic Church in the United States experienced a crisis that they had never addressed before in the history of the American church. The sexual abuse of children by clergy and the way that the church responded to the abuse caused great pain, anger, and confusion in a lot of Catholics, not just in the U.S. but globally as well.

Methodology

According to the article, “Silencing the Lambs: The Catholic Church’s Response to the 2002 Sexual Abuse Scandal” (2004), author Maria A. Dixon writes, “the Papal response to this American crisis was never designed to repair its image but instead to reassert its role as the ultimate representative of the Divine Will; maintain pastoral authority over congregants; and to silence efforts that threatened the orthodoxy and stability of theological tenets.”³⁵ My objective for this research is to try to understand the strategies in the Church’s response to not only an American but worldwide crisis. For the purpose of this study, it is my intent to focus on the rhetoric of not only the Church’s rhetoric regarding the abuse, but laypersons responses as well as the impact the media had on this crisis.

Throughout centuries, public apologies have been issued for one reason or another. Why do people feel the need to apologize? Some researchers who study apologia theory believe that apology is based on a specific set of factors – denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence – and a set of postures utilizing combinations of these factors resulting in absolution, vindication, explanation, and justification.³⁶ Other researchers have taken a different approach that relates to image or ideologies. These are affirmation, reaffirmation, purification, and subversion. Using these factors, I will be analyzing the remarks made by both John Paul II and the current Pope Benedict XVI.

To understand the rhetoric of the Catholic Church, one must first try and understand the Church as an organization. George Cheney’s research on the Catholic

Church as an organization is invaluable for this research. In his 1991 article, “Rhetoric is an organizational society: Managing multiple identities, he examines how the multiple audiences of the Catholic Church shaped the U.S. Catholic Church’s response to the socio-political issue of nuclear arms control. Emphasizing that the Catholic Church was similar in nature to the transnational corporations that ruled the global markets, Cheney pointed out that not only does the Church move beyond geographic and political constraints, it is also an institution that has succeeded in transcending, “an amazing array of cultures and historical circumstances”³⁷ Cheney feels that because the Church relies so much on its traditions and history for its institutional authority, facing new social realities might be a difficult challenge.³⁸ That being said, the clergy sexual abuse crisis would then pose a significant dilemma for the Catholic Church to have to address. “In seeking to understand the Catholic Church’s influence on discourses about sexuality, Michel Foucault (1978a) posited that the Church cultivated a unique form of discursive power to serve its theological needs. Rooted in the Davidic model of power found in the Old Testament, this form of power, unlike the traditional power of the sovereign, is a system of power that is enacted not as King but as shepherd (Foucault, 1978b).”³⁹ If you look at the traditions of the Catholic Church, the priests are the shepherds doing the work of God and the congregants are the sheep who obey their commands.

“Within this relational framework, the congregant who chooses to continue to rebel against the teaching of pastor and church, risks not only tension with the Church, but ultimately with its chief benefactor – God. Pastoral power works because the

hierarchy and the authority of the Catholic Church, while often repressive, at the same time, offers salvation (Foucault, 1978b).”⁴⁰

Preview

While the first chapter serves as the framework for my thesis the next two chapters will cover sexual abuse in the United States by clergy, specifically the Boston Diocese where the *Boston Globe* wrote approximately one hundred stories on the abuse as well as the impact on the Catholic Church by the media regarding the civil and criminal cases and statute of limitations by the Catholic Church. There are, of course, limitations to my research. First, the Catholic Church sexual abuse is not just an American problem, it is a global problem. To research this crisis globally would take years, therefore, for the purpose of this thesis; I will be focusing on the Boston Diocese, where the abuse was first reported.

Using quantitative content analysis as my methodology, I will review numerous newspaper articles from the *Boston Globe* focusing on the abuse reported in the Boston Diocese. The coding will be divided into two groups. Rhetoric made on behalf of the clergy as well as rhetoric on behalf of the victims. The articles that have been researched range from 1992 through 2008.

Quantitative content analysis is a research method defined as, “the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both

of production and consumption.”⁴¹ This type of research analysis requires identification of key terms or concepts and relationships among the concepts. “Content analysis involves conceptualization, design, and execution phases. Design considerations include: time, comparisons with other media or data sources, operationalization and measurement decisions, sampling, reliability, and appropriate statistical analysis.”⁴²

In the conclusion, I will elaborate on where the Church is today and what, if any, changes have been made to prevent this type of abuse from occurring in the future as well as the current status of the criminal and legal cases that are still pending.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF *BOSTON GLOBE* ARTICLES ON ABUSE

The scope of this research will focus specifically on the Archdiocese of Boston where an estimated 500 or more cases of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy since the 1960's have been reported. The analysis of this data will address the issue of apology by the Roman Catholic Church but will look at it from two perspectives: regret and remorse. The question then is: Are the apologies issued by the Roman Catholic Church apologies of regret or are they apologies of remorse?

The articles used for this research came directly from the *Boston Globe* dating between 1992 and 1998. Approximately 106 articles were perused for statements made by clergy from the Church regarding the sexual abuse as well as the abused victims regarding the sexual abuse. To begin this research we must define the difference between remorse and regret.

Remorse is defined as, “deep and painful regret for wrongdoing; compunction, pity and compassion. Regret, on the other hand has several definitions, “to feel sorrow or remorse for; to think of with a sense of loss; a feeling of sorrow or remorse for a fault, act, loss, disappointment, etc.”⁴³

Each article published by the *Boston Globe* was evaluated and coded for specific words that referred to remorse, regret, or anything associated with an apology issued on behalf of the Catholic Church. This type of coding allows the researcher to define and describe messages used for analysis. “Quantitative content analysis is most efficient

when explicit hypotheses or research questions are posed.”⁴⁴ “Hypotheses or research questions mean research designs can focus on collecting only relevant data, sparing unnecessary effort that may yield unreliable or invalid results. They also provide guidance on how to recognize and categorize that data and what level of measurement to use.”⁴⁵ It is the classification of textual material, reducing it to more relevant manageable bits of data that make using content analysis as a viable method for evaluating texts such as newspaper stories.

A central idea in content analysis is that the many words of the text are classified into much fewer content categories. Each category may consist of one, several, or many words. Words, phrases, or other units of text classified in the same category are presumed to have similar meanings. Depending on the purposes of the investigator, this similarity may be based on the precise meaning of the words (such as grouping synonyms together), or may be based on words sharing similar connotations (such as grouping together several words implying a concern with a concept . . .).⁴⁶

The first step in this process was to record words or phrases that were associated with an apology. Words such as sorry were few and far between when evaluating the commentary on behalf of the Church. The first apology came from Fr. Doyle, a Dominican priest and canon lawyer who was on the staff of the Vatican embassy in Washington. This apology was reported on July 12th, 1992. He said, “there have been cover-ups, that there has been stonewalling, that the problem has existed, that we’re sorry about it and will do everything to correct it.”⁴⁷

The next article to mention anything to do with an apology was on June 8th, 1998. This statement was issued by Brenda Fennessey, whose sons were molested by Fr. John Geoghan. She said, “There has not been one word out of this parish of an apology . . . The church is very, very wrong. They should put him in jail. This is about the worst crime a person can do.”⁴⁸

The most notable apology came from Cardinal Bernard Law on January 9, 2002. At a news conference Cardinal Law humbly apologized for transferring an abusive priest from parish to parish and announced a “zero tolerance policy” for clergy sexual abuse misconduct. He said, “Judgments were made regarding the assignment of John Geoghan which, in retrospect, were tragically incorrect.”⁴⁹ Responses on Cardinal Law’s apology came from victims such as Jason Berry, who authored the book, “Lead Us Not Into Temptation” (1992) on the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests. He said, “Anytime a bishop apologizes, it’s an admission of wrongdoing, and it’s a step, but let’s not overestimate it. It takes time to determine what will happen.”⁵⁰ Another comment to the Cardinal’s apology came from Monsignor Peter V. Conley, executive editor of the *Pilot*, the archdiocesan newspaper. He said, “I was touched by it – he took responsibility, he said he was profoundly sorry, and I could hear him choked up a bit.”⁵¹

Many who listened to Cardinal Law’s apology believed it was sincere and that he was indeed remorseful. A member of the *Boston Globe* staff, reporter Adrian Walker wrote an article after the Cardinal’s press conference. He said, “It felt strange listening to Law beg for absolution, ask for our prayers, described his as a ‘grieving heart.’ His sincerity was obvious, even if it came after enough stonewalling to build a cathedral.”⁵²

There were many who believed the sincerity of the Cardinal's repentance, but there were also many others who felt it was too little, too late. Phil Saviano, an advocate for victims of clergy sexual abuse said, "He's been saying 'I'm sorry' for 10 years now . . . So I don't think those kinds of apologies are going to have a lot of weight with the average victim."⁵³

Apologies issued on behalf of the church were minimal in this analysis. That is, those apologies that contained the words, "we are sorry or I'm sorry." There are others words which were coded that are sometimes construed as an apology. These words are relational to apology but do not actually admit remorse or regret. Those are statements of deniability, trust being broken, disillusioned, concerned, prayer and forgiveness. Up until the apology was issued by Cardinal Law, every member of the Catholic clergy that responded to questions or allegations used these words listed above. Not one time from the beginning of the articles published in 1992 until the apology in 2002, did any member of the clergy make an official apology on behalf of the church. It is the belief of this researcher that the statements made by the clergy were statements of regret, not remorse for the crimes committed by these priests.

When a person does something wrong, they either apologize and are truly remorseful, or they regret being caught, thereby issuing an apology, or in the case of the Catholic Church, using rhetoric which insinuates they feel regretful for what has occurred but they do not actually come out and apologize. An actual apology showing remorse is concrete. It means that someone did something wrong and they admit to it

and apologize for it. It cannot be silenced, it is out in the open and it needs to be addressed. The leadership of the Catholic Church did not do that. They covered it up.

When analyzing the responses from the victims of the clergy abuse in the articles, many of the same words or phrases kept reappearing. They were: cover-up, retribution, apologize, admission of guilt, outrage, distrust, damaging, and anger. Each and every victim that was interviewed felt a sense of outrage and disbelief that the leadership of their parishes would either deny any responsibility for what had happened to them or they were angered to find out that instead of addressing the situation at hand, the leadership would transfer the abuser to another parish so he could do it all over again to someone else. Frank Fitzpatrick, an insurance adjuster and licensed private detective was a victim of Fr. James Porter, who admitted to molesting over 100 children. Fitzpatrick told the *Boston Globe* staff, "There's no question the church covered it up . . . As far as Father Porter, he should be in jail for what he did. I don't believe a word of what he says about being cured."⁵⁴ Other reactions from victims dealt with trust. How is a person supposed to trust their children with priests? It does not matter whether or not they have been accused or convicted, if they are wearing a Roman collar, the level of trust has been diminished. Many priests are aware of this and feel very angry because of it. Fr. Rossetti, a priest in Syracuse, New York, who now works and studies at Boston College had this to say, "The closer the incident, the greater the harm done. . . People who knew of a priest charged with child sexual abuse were less likely to trust the church with their children, had less confidence in the church to take care of problems with its

clergy, were less supportive of celibacy and were less likely to look to the church for guidance on sexual issues.”⁵⁵

The final article examined for any words or sentences associated with an apology were published on September 10, 2007 in the *Boston Globe*. Protesters including members of Voice of the Faithful as well as other victims groups picketed in front of Our Lady of Victory Church where former secretary of ministerial personnel for the Archdiocese of Boston, Fr. Paul E. Micelli resided. He was a member of Cardinal Bernard Law’s staff from 1994 to 2001 and was a participant in the cover-up knowing that priests were being transferred from parish to parish who were guilty of child sexual abuse. Paul Kendrick, cofounder of the Maine chapter of Voice of the Faithful said they want Miceli to apologize to the victims. “We want him to be accountable and responsible for what he did because there are people who will never recover because of it. . . It’s hard for me to understand how people can come here and listen to his homilies and ignore all the people he’s harmed, the children he scarred because he wanted to protect the church instead of them.”⁵⁶

Using the four strategies of apologia; denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence, I analyzed the coded articles to see what category they fit into, if any. Each apology issued on behalf of the Catholic Church was given during different stages of the crisis, which appeared to impact which strategy was used.

Denial was the most used strategy by the less authoritative members of the Catholic Church. These strategies were used by the various parish priests who when approached by the victims regarding the abuse, denied that it ever occurred.

The second most used strategy for apologia was transcendence. It was this strategy that was used by the higher, more authoritative members of the Catholic Church, for example, the statements issued by Cardinal Bernard Law used transcendental strategies.

In 2005, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops revised the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People addressing the issues of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. It was written in the preamble of the charter that as a whole, which officially admitted wrongdoing and apologized for the suffering this crisis caused victims across the nation.

As bishops, we have acknowledged our mistakes and our roles in that suffering, and we apologize and take responsibility again for too often failing victims and the Catholic people in the past. From the depths of our hearts, we bishops express great sorrow and profound regret for what the Catholic people have endured.⁵⁷

Are these apologies issued on behalf of the Catholic Church strategies of trying to repair the image of the Catholic Church or are they genuine? This question may not ever be answered because it is difficult to perceive what the motives are behind an apology. The fact that the Church covered up such crimes for decades makes the average person ask themselves if this is just a way to get parishioners back in the pews. The Church wanted this crisis to go away but the victims and the media made sure the public was aware of the events that were to unfold.

CHAPTER III

IMPACT ON CATHOLIC CHURCH BY THE MEDIA

The sexual abuse of minors by clergy was not a subject that was given much attention prior to the Archdiocese of Boston scandal. Sexual abuse by Catholic priests had gone unreported for several decades mainly because of the church's ability to cover it up and remove or relocate the priest to a different parish.

As previously stated, the *Boston Globe* wrote over 100 articles focused specifically on the abuse in the Boston Diocese and surrounding areas. Each article painted the vivid picture of abuse at the hands of priests, specifically Fr. John Geoghan who admitted to sexually molesting young boys for over 40 years. The reports from the *Globe* describe how Cardinal Bernard F. Law as well as other clergy, aware of Fr. Geoghan's behavior, continued to allow him access to young boys by transferring him to other parishes, not removing him from the situation all together. The majority of the information reported by the *Globe* came out in 2002, when on January 10th, 2002; Cardinal Bernard Law finally issued a public apology. This was the first apology issued on behalf of the Archdiocese of Boston.

The United States at this time was dealing with issues related to military action in Afghanistan and the search for Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network. No one ever foresaw the impact that this crisis would have on the Catholic Church. On a mid-March evening in 2002, two weeks before Easter Sunday, Campbell Brown of NBC News interviewed President George Bush which was suppose to focus on questions

regarding the war in Afghanistan. What she wanted to discuss was the crisis of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and what President Bush's opinion was about whether or not Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston should resign. Bush's response was he trusted Church leaders and Cardinal Law to do what was right.⁵⁸

That interview brought about a firestorm in the media. Between March and April of 2002, the crisis made the covers of *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. *People* magazine even did a major story as well as Oprah Winfrey, who dedicated an entire show to the topic. One can imagine how difficult it might have been for any Catholic Cardinal, Bishop, or Priest to celebrate mass at Easter services. The story that caught the nation's attention was that of the expose done by the *Boston Globe*. Each article gave vivid details of how a priest (Fr. John Geoghan) had preyed on children from 1962 to 1995 and how Cardinal Bernard Law and other religious leaders in the Archdiocese of Boston had continually received reports on the inappropriate behavior of Fr. Geoghan, had instructed him to seek treatment and then moved him throughout the diocese from one parish to another.

Time magazine did an article on how a priest such as Father Laurence Brett from Connecticut had seduced teenage boys so frequently they were dubbed "Brett's Mavericks" to make them feel special. The article went on to describe how Fr. Brett had told one of his victims that performing oral sex on the priest was another way for this young man to receive Holy Communion. This sexual assault occurred in the early 1960's but it took almost 30 years for Church leaders to act on it. Because of the

Church's inability to halt this kind of abuse cost them over \$1 million in damages for just one victim.

The major news magazines were not the only ones getting in on the action. The *Detroit Free Press*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and even *Sports Illustrated* gave readers vivid details of the relationship between Father Gerald Shirilla and Tom Paciorek, a major league baseball player and sports broadcaster. Paciorek reported that Fr. Shirilla had sexually abused him over 100 times in four years as well as a 72 hour sexual marathon which occurred on a camping trip. Paciorek said he felt as if he was a prisoner and he wanted to die. He thought it would never come to an end.

Article after article, interviews, news reports . . . the media's attention was to report the ongoing conspiracy by Church leader's and to give readers a front row view of the disgust playing out in the Catholic Church. Catholics nationwide were appalled. In a national poll, 56 percent of Catholics surveyed gave a negative rating when asked how they felt their bishops and cardinals had handled the cases of sexual abuse by priests. Catholics' overall approval rating dropped to 68 percent from 84 percent five months earlier.⁵⁹ So how does this media frenzy impact the Church? From the reduction of donations from parishioners in these affected dioceses. According to the *Boston Globe*, 20 percent of Catholics in the Archdiocese of Boston said they were not going to be as generous as they had in the past. This put a huge financial burden on the Church because of the enormous lawsuits being paid out, not just in the Boston area but across the country. Because of the media focus, victims who were once silent came forward. Support groups of victims such as the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests had

over 3,700 members, according to the national director, David Clohessy. Day after day, calls would come into the national office by victims who were angered by the failure of Church leaders to protect parishioners from these pedophile priests. Then, in mid-March amongst the media circus, Pope John Paul offered commentary regarding the sexual abuse. He said, “As priests, we are personally and profoundly afflicted by the sins of some of our brothers who have betrayed the grace of ordination. The Catholic Church shows her concern for the victims and strives to respond in truth and justice.”⁶⁰ Victims were outraged by these comments. Not once was there an admission of any guilt, nor was there an apology. Priests such as Fr. Geoghan preyed upon single mothers who were trying to raise their children in a Catholic home without a father figure around. These women were alone, poor and were desperate and Fr. Geoghan not only knew this, he used it to his advantage.

The impact that this crisis has had on the church is significant. It has shattered the faith of many families and it has also been devastating on a large number of priests who are not child molesters. Cardinal Law stated in his apology to those victims, “The trust that was broken in the lives of those suffering the effects of abuse is a trust which was built upon the selfless lives of thousands of priests who have served faithfully and well in this archdiocese throughout its history.”⁶¹

Prior to the 1980’s there was little attention being paid by the media on sexual abuse cases in the Catholic Church. Those victims who sought compensation were few and far between. Once the media began investigating the broad number of cases being reported, it was then that litigation took on a new face for the victims. The Church could

not cover-up the firestorm that was erupting. The influence the news media had on people's perceptions fueled the fire. Published reports of depositions, details in transcripts provided the backdrop as credible news sources painted the ugly picture of hundreds and hundreds of victims recounting the horror of years of abuse. "The litigation process provided a steady flow of new developments that supported ongoing coverage. And intensive coverage encouraged increasing numbers of victims to come forward and seek legal redress, spurring additional litigation, which, in turn, gave rise to more coverage, creating a self-reinforcing news theme and the perception of a "wave" of litigation and a "crisis" in the Church."⁶² Was the media responsible for the impact? Pope John Paul II believed the publicity was more damaging than the actual abuse. Jason Berry, author of the book, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children* stated, "Sensationalism indeed pervades the American media culture; yet the notion of "a person's fall" evades an ethical position on what it means when an archbishop pursues sexual gratification from vulnerable young females, while covering up for other priests who abused children."⁶³

Some suggested that the Catholic Church was being singled out and that it was unfair. There had always been reports of abuse by scoutmasters, teachers, coaches, and day-care workers. So why was it that the Catholic Church being put on trial? "To people, and to children in particular, a member of the clergy is a representative of God," says Mike Lew, author of *Victims No Longer*, the seminal examination of male survivors of child sexual abuse. "And if a representative of God is an agent of abuse, it's almost

as if – and I’m talking about the subjective experience of the child – even God is not safe.”⁶⁴

Was this crisis an epic failure on the part of the Catholic Church? Many of the survivors and the victims of the abuse would say yes, this was a failure on many levels. First and foremost, the inability for the Church to apologize with some sense of remorse would have been the responsible way to address this crisis rather than maintain a level of secrecy which culminated into chaos. Was it important for the Church to own up to the abuse and ask for forgiveness? Is there a correlation between apology and forgiveness?

In research done on forgiveness and apologies, findings were inconsistent. “Ohbuchi, Kameda, and Agarie (1989) found apology mediates aggression and revenge-taking in the victim. In a series of studies to determine the effects of various types of apologies on their recipients, Bennett and Dewberry (1994) found people might feel constrained to accept an apology even if they would rather not and even if the apology is weak.”⁶⁵ The study also showed that women were more apt to forgive than men. Can this be said for sexual abuse by clergy of children though? According to the research conducted by Thomas, et al, women were more forgiving of a male pastor who took responsibility for a sexual boundary violation, but men, on the other hand, were more forgiving of the male clergy who did not take responsibility at all. The researchers said, “Our research supported the hypothesis that pastor and participant gender is significantly associated with willingness to forgive and restore. It also showed that an apology that included an intention to take responsibility influenced forgiveness, but only when mediated by gender.”⁶⁶ Taking responsibility for the actions of clergy from the very

beginning would have been the responsible thing for the Church to do. There are several assumptions as to why Church officials took an indirect approach to the crisis. One assumption is that the Church has a sense of elitism among the clergy and in particular the hierarchy of the Church. “Belief in this elitism also persists among many of the laity and may be considered an enabling force for clericalism.”⁶⁷ Other assumptions, according to Reverend Thomas Doyle, a Canon Lawyer and United States Air Force Chaplain are:

Catholic Church leadership (bishops, etc.) never fully understood the destructive nature of sexual abuse of minors until very recently when the spate of lawsuits and widespread publicity forced their education on the issue. Many bishops have admitted to thinking of sexual abuse solely in terms of *moral fault* and *sin*. The appropriate remedy was admission of guilt, penance and the will not to sin again. Bishops looked at the priests’ sense of religious commitment but not at their psychological motivation. Since the alleged perpetrators were priests, bishops tended to minimize the impact on victims and thought instead of the possible consequences for the institutional church. The institutional church leadership made every effort to control the problem as tightly as possible.”⁶⁸

Another assumption is that “Church lawyers are frequently provided a basis for trying to short-circuit lawsuits through motions for summary judgment, namely, that the civil law doctrine of “*respondeat superior*” does not apply *because the institutional church (the bishop, diocese or religious order) has no*

fiduciary responsibility to the victims nor control over a cleric's actions while he is not performing official duties.”⁶⁹

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: STATUS OF CATHOLIC CHURCH TODAY

The sexual abuse of children by clergy is probably the biggest crisis ever to impact the Roman Catholic Church. The Church's cover-up by officials is an example of a massive institutional failure. Because of the Church's inability to admit wrongdoing from the very beginning, this allowed government officials to get involved bringing about changes in public policy and litigation. "Litigation was the primary force in attracting attention to the problem, shaping perceptions of it, and making it a policy priority within both the Church and state governments."⁷⁰

The Catholic Church relies on tithing from parishioners in each diocese to support individual churches, therefore, any lawsuit filed by a victim would not be filed against the Catholic Church as a whole. "In lawsuits against the Catholic Church, plaintiffs have framed clergy sexual abuse as not merely a problem of child exploitation by individual clergy members, but also as an institutional failure on the part of Church officials."⁷¹

As of 2002, over \$350 million has been awarded to victims in public settlements thus far. The number awarded to victims in private settlements is unknown. In 1998 after Reverend John Geoghan was defrocked, fourteen years after Cardinal Bernard Law was made aware of the problem, the Archdiocese of Boston was expected to pay anywhere from \$30 to \$45 million in damages arising from lawsuits filed by Geoghan's

victims. There were also many other lawsuits in and around the Archdiocese of Boston as well as San Francisco and Connecticut which paid out substantial settlements.

In 2004, the Archdiocese of Boston said its goal was to try and raise \$10.5 million over the next year, which was significantly lower than the previous year because of the impact of sexual abuse cases. In 2007, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles settled with some of their sexual abuse victims for an estimated \$250 million. These numbers are staggering and it is a recurring theme across the nation. So how does the Church address this financially?

In 2005, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany was elected the next leader of the Catholic Church. Once that occurred, Pope Benedict XVI inherited one of the biggest financial challenges facing the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church does have numerous assets such as Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City and multiple Basilicas, art collections, which, according to the church, are valued at a measly one euro so that they will never be sold. According to Gabriel Kahn, Rome Correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, he says, "Those assets are not liquid and they can't be put to use for the Catholic Church in a way they could be for, say, a corporation."⁷²

According to an article in the *Boston Globe* written in March 2006, the church sexual abuse crisis cost Catholic dioceses approximately \$467 million in settlements to victims.⁷³ This data, according to the article, was collected by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

While the number of allegations is decreasing, the financial cost to the church increased over the last year due to some large settlements paid in 2005, said Teresa M. Kettelkamp, director of the USCCB's Office of Child and Youth Protection. The audits results bring the total cost of the church sexual abuse crisis to nearly \$1.2 billion, not including undisclosed payments the church made during 2003 and this year.⁷⁴

The Church is still faced with allegations from other dioceses across the nation have not yet gone through the legal system. One very important issue that is of great concern to the victims is the statute of limitations. Some of these cases occurred in the early 1960's and the Church did their best to cover it up prolonging the agony for the victims. The limit now is 15 years, but the Judiciary Committee in Boston recommended that the statute of limitations be extended to 25 years. Advocates for victims of clergy sexual abuse want the statute of limitations lifted completely because, "it takes decades for victims to face the abuse they suffered as children."⁷⁵

So how does the Church work to prevent something such as the sexual abuse from happening again? The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops created the "Promise to Protect Pledge to Heal" Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People Essential Norms Statement of Episcopal Commitment, which was revised in June of 2005 as a way to first admit mistakes made and apologize, secondly, to take responsibility for the victims and establish a commitment for creating a safe environment for children of the Church. Procedures and principles for the charter consist of the following:

- The Office for Child and Youth Protection provides the focus for a consistent, ongoing, and comprehensive approach to creating a secure environment for young people throughout the Church in the United States.
- The Office also provides the means for us to be accountable for achieving the goals of the *Charter*, as demonstrated by its two reports on the implementation of the *Charter* based on independent compliance audits.
- The National Review Board is carrying on its responsibility to assist in the assessment of diocesan compliance with the *Charter* and to commission studies on the sexual abuse of minors, and it has issued its own *Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States*.
- The descriptive study of the nature and scope of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy in the United States, commissioned by the National Review Board, has been completed. The resulting study, examining the historical period 1950-2002, by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice provides us with a powerful tool not only to examine our past but also to secure our future against such misconduct.
- Victims' assistance coordinators are in place throughout our nation to assist dioceses in responding to the pastoral needs of those who have been injured by abuse.

- Diocesan/eparchial bishops in every diocese are advised and greatly assisted by diocesan review boards as the bishops make the decisions needed to fulfill the *Charter*.
- Safe environment programs are in place to assist parents and children – and those who work with children – in preventing harm to young people.⁷⁶

The Church believes that addressing any issues at hand and following the steps listed above will encourage a safe environment within the Church for children and provide a commitment to dioceses across the country. That being said, there are some that believe this commitment is too little, too late. More needs to be done to prevent crisis such as this from happening in the future. So what might that entail? Some Catholics feel that the Church needs to relax the restrictions on celibacy, allow priests to marry, as well as loosen up the restrictions on gay clergy. The Church officially condemns homogenital sex, there are many priests who are very accepting of gay people who come into the Church. Though the Church might be accepting of individuals who are gay, they are less than accepting of priests who are gay. In the June 19th, 1987, *Commonweal*, the liberal Notre Dame theologian, Rev. Richard P. McBrien, posed questions about this subject.

Among the questions:

Does [sexual orientation] affect the gay priests' ministerial relations with heterosexual males, with women, with families, and with children? How does his homosexuality affect his relationship with heterosexual priests? Does the nature of these various relationships differ if the gay priest is sexually inactive rather

than sexually active? If there is, in fact, a large body of gay priests in the United States, is there any relation between this phenomenon and the increasing visibility of child-molestation cases involving Catholic laity? Do gay seminarians create a gay culture in seminaries? To what extent are seminary faculty members part of this culture? Are heterosexual seminarians “turned off” by existence of such a culture?⁷⁷

Two years after Rev. McBrien’s article, Andrew Greeley wrote a response in the *National Catholic Reporter* regarding gay clergy. He wrote:

Blatantly active homosexual priests are appointed, transferred and promoted. Lavender rectories and seminaries are tolerated. National networks of active homosexual priests (many of them church administrators) are tolerated. Pedophiles are reassigned (despite the legal risks) and sometimes subjected to compulsory treatment with drugs to control their passions. If a heterosexual priest engaged in a blatant love affair with a woman, he would be suspended as quickly as a phone call could be made to the chancery.⁷⁸

Is the Church more tolerant of homosexual priests? Further research might show that from the lack of responsibility taken on behalf of the Church regarding the sexual abuse by clergy, that indeed, the Church refuses to publically come out of the closet.

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