

# The Tablet

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## Inside

### Celebrating February Catholic Press Month

In his weekly column, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio says that he believes the free operation of the Catholic Press is essential to securing the truth in the Church. Editor Ed Wilkinson also writes about the Catholic Press as one way to achieve success and salvation. PP. 4 and 14.

### Another Bishop Gets Tough on Pro-Abortors

Another member of the U.S. hierarchy has set limits on the Church's dealings with supporters of legalized abortion. Archbishop James P. Keleher of Kansas City says it is inappropriate to invite pro-abortion advocates to speak on Church grounds. P. 5.

### Ozone Park Parish Has a New Tradition

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish, Ozone Park, was looking for a new activity for adults. It came up with a pre-Lenten Mardi Gras celebration which is sure to become an annual event. P. 7

### Prayer Breakfast in Gerritsen Beach

A woman who once had an opportunity to avenge the death of her son but chose forgiveness instead, was the main speaker at a prayer breakfast organized by the Charismatic Renewal Office and hosted by Resurrection parish, Gerritsen Beach. P. 13.

## Lent

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## Statement by Bishop DiMarzio On Clergy Sexual Abuse

As one of many steps taken by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to confront the painful clergy sexual abuse scandal in the past two years, the National Review Board established by the bishops commissioned the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan to reveal "the nature and scope" of the problem by compiling statistics on perpetrators and victims.

The study asked the 195 archdioceses and dioceses in our nation to search their records dating from 1950 to the end of 2002 and to submit their findings to the John Jay study team. On Feb. 27, the team issued a report "in globo," not diocese-by-diocese. We chose the same date to release the information the Diocese of Brooklyn submitted for the John Jay report.

As for the significant statistics, relative to allegations received, we found that of 2,114 incardinated priests and deacons serving in the Diocese over that time, 73 were accused of sexual misconduct with minors. Percentagewise, that comes to 3.45% of the clergy. During that same period, 11,815 priests from outside the Diocese and from religious orders served here. Accusations were made against them by 14 individuals, or 0.0012%.

In all, the Diocese received accusations of sexual misconduct by clergy with minors from 188 persons. Twenty-three of these allegations were presented to the Diocese after accused diocesan priests had died.

Of the accused incardinated clergy, 25 are dead, 16 are retired and 24 no longer serve in priestly ministry. Allegations against eight priests were determined to be unsubstantiated.

Settlements agreed upon by the victims and the Diocese amounted to \$783,168. The cost of providing counseling for them was \$683,373. Legal fees for the Diocese totaled \$187,902.20.

The review of the records by decade showed that almost 150 instances of sexual abuse were committed in the three decades beginning in the 1960s but far fewer in recent years. The breakdown was 15 in the 1950s, 45 in the 1960s, 62 in the 1970s, 42 in the 1980s, 20 in the 1990s and four since 2000.

The reports of allegations given to the Diocese by victims swelled since 1990. There were two reports in the 1950s, seven in the 1960s, 13 in the 1970s, 20 in the 1980s and 150 since 1990.

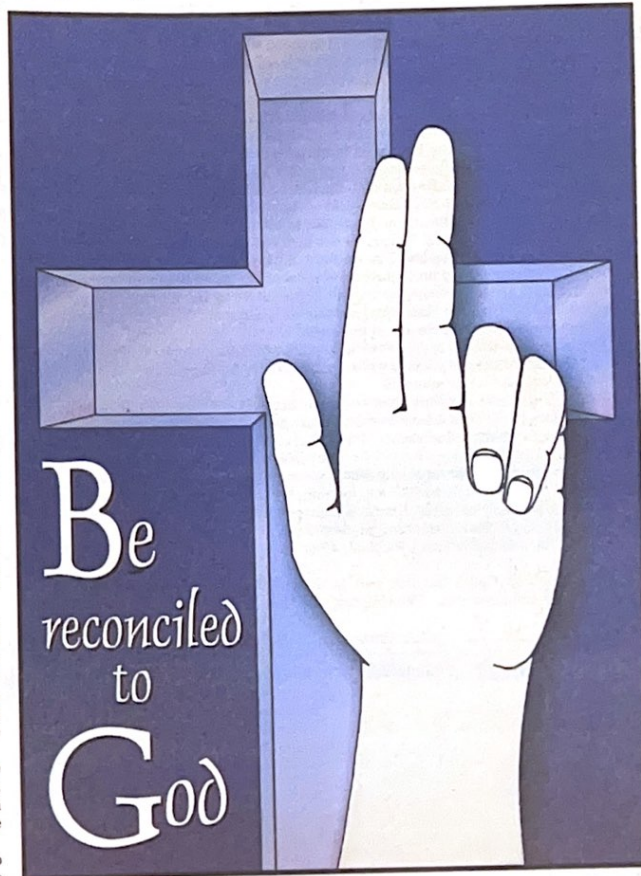
This report motivates a recommitment to the safety of young people from anyone who

would abuse them sexually or in any other way. The Diocese has taken steps to respond to accusations received over the years. I am grateful for and supported by the work of the Diocesan Review Board, comprised of eight outstanding individuals and chaired by Bernard Helldorfer of St. John's University. They advise me as to any course of action that needs to be taken in the light of claims of inappropriate behavior. They are most generous with their time

and counsel.

The Victims Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese, Sister Ellen Patricia Finn, O.P., of Catholic Charities, has done extraordinary work in her role, offering pastoral care for victims and their families - counseling, spiritual guidance and support. She is creating "healing teams" of skilled and trained clergy, Religious and lay people who can

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## Lent Has Begun

# Bishop DiMarzio Offers Apology and Sets Day of Prayer and Penance for Sins of Sexual Abuse

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work one-on-one and in groups and also offer parish outreach. We continue to urge anyone who wishes to report an allegation to do so.

Although I have ministered here in this Diocese for only a short time, I have become keenly aware that, over the years, the priests and Religious given the awesome responsibility of listening and responding to the painful stories of victims have done so with Christ-like charity, recognizing the dignity and worth of each one as an individual made in the image and likeness of God. They have fulfilled their roles with exquisite concern for the well-being of the victims. They have also manifested sensitive pastoral concern for those accused.

## Awareness Training

Another diocesan initiative, coordinating the VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children" awareness training workshops for adults, has reached more than 3,000 clergy, Religious and laity who have contact with children. I am grateful to Sister Jane Scanlon, C.N.D., Vice Chancellor, and her committee for their leadership in organizing the sessions.

Sister Jane is also heading a search committee to fill the position of Safe

Environment Program Coordinator. The person selected will oversee the continued development of sexual abuse education and awareness programs for adults and children, coordinate background

lic recognition they have given to our joint efforts. I pledge a continuing commitment to that relationship.

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checks of diocesan personnel and volunteers and ensure awareness of a ministerial Code of Conduct.

I am pleased with the cooperation of the Office of District Attorney of Kings County and the Office of District Attorney of Queens County and the pub-

lic recognition they have given to our joint efforts. I pledge a continuing commitment to that relationship.

As I have said many times since this devastating scandal erupted, even one instance of inappropriate behavior with a child or young person is one too many. Where are we as a Church if even one child is vulnerable in the company of someone representing the Church of Jesus?

One wonders if enough could ever be

done to console the victims of such abuse. As an act of reparation for the sins of a few, I am designating April 5, the Monday of Holy Week, as a day of prayer and penance. I will invite the faithful of our Diocese to join me in dedicating that day to the welfare of all victims by means of fasting and other penitential acts.

Allow me at this point to say to every victim, I am sorry for the transgressions committed against you. I state this with heartfelt sincerity. You have endured indignities that can never be justified. That these acts were committed by clergy ordained to serve God's people with dignity and respect makes this even more painful. Please accept this apology, which I offer from the depths of my soul.

I say publicly and on behalf of the multitude of people of our Diocese who share my concern for the safety of children and young people that we will do all within our ability to keep them safe. There will be an ongoing effort to restore their trust and the trust of their loved ones.

Whatever hurts one part of the Body of Christ hurts all. As Bishop of this portion of God's Kingdom, I commit myself to following a path that will keep His Body whole. I ask our good people to join me on this journey.

## Church Leaders Hope to Learn from Sex Abuse Statistics

BY AGOSTINO BONO

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Statistics tied to a national study of child sex abuse by Catholic clergy focus on peak periods of abuse from the late 1960s through the 1980s, an abundance of single-incidence abusers, and an overwhelming majority of teenage victims.

Such data covering the 1950-2002 period provides information about the nature and scope of the situation. It also gives Church leaders and child-care specialists key insights in understanding causes of abuse and in judging methods of prevention.

Preliminary figures showed that more than 4,400 clergymen were accused of child sex abuse.

"The large number is sobering" but in keeping with "ballpark figures" developed by specialists, said David Finkelhor, director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire.

More important than the numbers is what measures are needed to prevent child sex abuse, he told Catholic News Service in a telephone interview.

"When you have an organization that has the trust of families and children, you need to get the number as close to zero as possible," he said.

Finkelhor said that the statistical drop-off in abuse since the 1990s needs follow-up to determine the reasons why that has occurred and what have proven to be better prevention methods.

The U.S. bishops' National Review Board on sexual abuse scheduled the release of national figures covering the period 1950-2002 for Feb. 27. The figures were compiled by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York from figures submitted by almost all of the 195 U.S. dioceses. The same day the National Review Board was also releasing its own companion study on the causes of the sex abuse crisis, based on a series of interviews with Church leaders and specialists. When the bishops formed the board in 2002, part of its mandate was to develop those studies.

Citing a draft of the John Jay report as its source, CNN reported Feb. 16 that 4,450 clergy - about 4% of the priests and deacons in ministry during the period - were accused of child sex abuse. Other data CNN reported from that draft included:

- 78% of the alleged victims were 11-17 years old.
- More than half of the clergy faced only one allegation.

Many dioceses which released their local figures prior to Feb. 27 showed a preponderance of child sex abuse incidents from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Thomas Plante, a psychologist who has edited two

books on clergy child sex abuse, said that the 4% figure is in keeping with previous estimates and may not be far off from the general adult male population.

"There is a lot of male sex abuse of minors. Tragically, it is not an infrequent problem," said Plante, a psychology professor at Santa Clara University in California.

He said there is child sex abuse in other religions and in professions such as teaching and coaching.

Attention was drawn to the Catholic Church because "things got out of control," he said.

In the Catholic Church there is not as much local accountability as there is in other denominations, Plante told CNS.

"Other religious bodies have checks and balances, boards of directors that can hire and fire, term limits to office," he said.

"Catholic bishops don't answer to a regional body of bishops. Their boss is 10,000 miles away at the Vatican and he is trying to manage 20% of the world population," he said.

Plante referred to John Geoghan, the Boston priest accused of abusing more than 130 children in 30 years.

"Geoghan was miraculously transferred from parish to parish. He would get canned in other religious traditions having a board evaluating things," said Plante.

Regarding the clergy figures, Plante said the positive side is that more than 95% of priests did not abuse.

"Whenever you have over 100,000 men in a 50-year period, you get a certain percent who do some nasty things," said Plante, who treats clergy sex abusers and their victims.

### Low Number of Victims

Plante said he was surprised at the low number of victims reported. CNN said preliminary figures showed 11,000 victims.

This comes out to less than three per perpetrator, whereas previous estimates based on reports from treatment centers indicated it was eight victims per clergy abuser, Plante said.

The low number of victims per abuser coupled with the high number of post-pubescent teenagers who were victims lends support to experts who say that treatment programs for abusers can successfully reduce relapse for a significant majority of them.

Plante said that hard-core abusers are pedophiles, adults attracted to pre-pubescent children. "They're harder to treat and almost impossible to cure."

Pedophilia is a diagnosed psychiatric disease, he

said.

In contrast, adult attraction to teenagers "is not that abnormal," with most people able to control it, he said.

Adults tend to lose control over their attraction to teenagers when they have another problem at the same time acting as a trigger, said Plante.

Triggers include alcoholism, brain damage and depression, he said.

Many experts have complained that the more dramatic cases of pedophile priests who abused numerous victims have distorted public awareness that there are different types of abusers and that many can be taught to control their attractions through therapy and supervision.

Preliminary data on clergy abusers indicates that most of their victims are adolescent boys while in the general society the major problem is men abusing girls.

Plante said that clergy are more likely to abuse boys because boys are more accessible to them than girls.

"Many priests work in all-boys schools, take boys to swim meets. They give boys massages," he said.

Plante and Finkelhor said that homosexuality may be a factor in some of the clergy sex abuse but is not a principal cause.

"Sexual orientation is not a good predictor of who will abuse minors," said Plante.

"Some priests are attracted to boys. A lot are not. It's a question of access," he said.

The cultural revolution of the 1960s may have contributed to the high number of child sex abuse incidents by clergy from the 1960s through the 1980s, said Finkelhor, also a sociology professor at the University of New Hampshire.

"There was a relaxation of sexual norms combined with a questioning of traditional institutions and authority. People were suspicious of traditional forms of doing things," he said.

Plante said that in the Church this cultural revolution coincided with the religious upheaval caused by the Second Vatican Council, further disorienting many priests.

For priests ordained in the 1950s, Plante added, other factors included entering minor seminaries at high school age, lack of sophisticated psychological screening of seminary candidates and little knowledge about how to deal with sexual issues.

"The approach was take a cold shower and pray," he said.