

Poland, clergy sex abuse cases and the ensuing cover-ups have proven to be a worldwide problem. This past spring, three leading bishops resigned in Europe. Scores of other clergy across the globe have faced lawsuits, criminal cases, and public allegations of sexual abuse or cover-up...It is not about one man or one country, it is about an institution.²

While many Catholics in the U.S.A. have begun calling for the exposure of the facts, removal of corrupt bishops, reform, redress and compensation, the Vatican has for many years ordered the strictest secrecy in child abuse cover-up cases.

The order, written in Latin, was sent from the Vatican in 1962 and is marked with the seal of Pope John XXIII...The document states: “Matters should be pursued in a most secretive way...they are to be restrained by a perpetual silence...and everyone pertaining to the tribunal in any way...is to observe the strictest secret, which is commonly regarded as a secret of the Holy Office...under the penalty of excommunication.”³

Since 1962, Rome has warned her cardinals, archbishops and bishops to keep the clergy sexual abuse secret. The press has begun to expose this clandestine legislation,

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church has been instructed by the Vatican at least since 1962 to keep certain cases of clergy sexual abuse secret under pain of excommunication, according to Boston lawyer Carmen L. Durso. A copy of the directive was sent yesterday to U.S. Attorney Michael J. Sullivan at his Boston office by Mr. Durso, who said it might also explain why Cardinal Bernard F. Law and bishops of the Boston Archdiocese and elsewhere covered up sexual abuse of children by clergy...Paul Baier, president of *Survivors First*, a victims’ advocacy group, who is also familiar with the document, called the church’s action in concealing instances of sexual abuse “a coordinated effort of conspiracy.” Bryan Smith of Hubbardston, Worcester area leader of *Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests*, said people in the church who covered up for priests “should be prosecuted. If it were anyone else, they would be in jail by now.”⁴

Claim for Excellence of the Catholic Priesthood

First, then, priests are to make it their most cherished object to make clear to people the excellence and necessity of the priesthood. They do this by their preaching and by the personal witness of a life that shows clearly a spirit of service and a genuine paschal joy. Then they spare no trouble or inconvenience in helping both youths and older men whom they prudently consider suitable for so great a ministry to prepare themselves properly so that they can be called at some time by the bishops...The meaning and excellence of the priesthood is to be highlighted.⁵

One of the primary jobs of the priest is to recruit other men for the priesthood. Thus the mystique, power and glory of the priesthood is a common theme within Catholicism. What is this charm and nobility that is held up before Catholic youth and their parents by Rome? Rome declares quite emphatically that the priesthood, which is offered to her young men, is an identical priesthood with that of Christ himself.

All priests share with bishops the *one identical priesthood and ministry of Christ*.⁶ The priest offers the Holy Sacrifice *in persona Christi*; this means more than offering “in the name of” or “in the place of Christ.” *In persona* means in specific sacramental identification with “the Eternal High Priest.”⁷

What is proposed before Catholic youth is that there is a specific identification between Christ and the priest.

Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is truly made like to the high priest and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself (*virtute ac persona ipsius Christi*).⁸

What devout Catholic youth, who aspires to be good and successful in his religious life, would not want to be in such an office as to possess the authority, power and very priesthood of Christ himself? This is what the official documents of the Church of Rome declare. In very attractive terms, this is what is put in the pope’s addresses, in magazines, articles and vocation lectures given in Catholic schools to bring the youth into the priesthood.

The very *work of redemption* is also declared to be part of the priestly life. Vatican Council II states, “In the mystery of the eucharistic sacrifice, in which priests fulfill the principle function, *the work of our redemption is continually carried out.*”⁹ What higher call could be present before youth to which they would not wish in their youthful enthusiasm to achieve? They are told that all sacraments are the work of the priest, and that they are essential to the work of Christ.

By Baptism priests introduce men into the People of God; by the sacrament of Penance they reconcile sinners with God and the Church; by the Anointing of the Sick they relieve those who are ill; and especially by the celebration of the Mass they offer Christ’s sacrifice sacramentally.¹⁰

The most sublime power alleged by Rome for her priests is that they can bring down on the altar the same single sacrifice that Jesus offered:

The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. The victim is one and the same. The same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different...In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and *is offered* in an unbloody manner.¹¹

This claims that Christ is contained in the elements of the Mass, that he is offered by a human being to God, and that the offering is in an unbloody mode. None of these claims are true, yet this is the appeal that the Catholic priesthood has to youth. Many young men go into the diocesan seminaries and into the religious orders (the Jesuits, Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans and others) so that they may have a share in the very priesthood of Christ and that they may claim this identity with the High Priest himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The One Sacrificial Priest—In the New Testament, no sacrificial priests are mentioned, only elders and pastors. There is no biblical basis for Catholic priests. In Christ, all believers are part of the royal priesthood of Christ in spiritual praise—but no one has a share in his sacrificial priesthood.

The contrast between Christ’s priesthood and the Old Testament priesthood is clear. Those priests were mere mortal

men, therefore, they needed successors. Christ, in contrast, is an eternal priest and his priesthood is untransferable and needs no successor. “They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood” (*Heb 7:23-24*). “Unchangeable” in the Greek literally means “untransferable.” This is the sense of the passage. The Levitical priesthood passed from one to another. The priesthood of Christ is eternal, and is never transferred to another.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (*Heb 7:25*). Christ saves completely because he “ever liveth.” “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (*v27*). The other priests before Christ all died; it was necessary that their office should pass to others. They were sinful men also, and it was necessary that sacrifices should be made for them. Christ did away with that priesthood at Calvary: “Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (*Matt 27:51*). This signified the end of the Levitical priesthood. The office of many priests in the Old Testament was done away with because this one priest continues forever!

Christ alone was qualified to offer himself—“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (*Heb 7:26*). He is the sole sacrificial priest of the New Testament. He finished the work of our salvation by *one* offering. The Scriptures repeatedly establish this truth. The substance of this is in Christ’s declaration from the cross, “*Tetelestai.*” “*It is finished*” (*John 19:30*).

The One Sacrifice, Once Offered—Christ’s sacrifice marked the fulfillment and end of the priestly ordinances of the Old Testament—“there is no more offering for sin” (*Heb 10:18*). Jesus “when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (*Heb 1:3*). It is clear that Christ’s sacrifice was designed to be *once for all*, in contrast to the many sacrifices that went before. “But this man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God...For by *one* offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (*Heb 10:12,14*).

The perfection and uniqueness of Christ’s sacrifice is in the very fact that it was a single offering made only “*once.*” The concept *once* is deemed so important that it is asserted seven times by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament—“In that he died, he died unto sin *once*” (*Rom 6:10*); “So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many” (*Heb 9:28*); “Christ also hath *once* suffered for sins” (*1 Peter 3:18*; see also *Heb 7:27; 9:12,26; 10:10*).

Life as it is Lived in Catholic Seminaries—Were it not documented in Catholic books¹² one would hardly believe the utter decadence in seminaries and in colleges that train men for the priesthood. The subculture of homosexuality is rampant across the U.S.A. Page after page of *Goodbye, Good Men* tells of the horrific influence of homosexuality that has permeated the youth in Catholic seminaries. The ideals

of youth are replaced by unnatural lusts that have become prevalent in major seminaries. Donald Cozzens, leading Catholic priest and rector of St. Mary’s in Cleveland, Ohio, (a leading U.S. seminary) states in his book on the priesthood:

An NBC report on celibacy and the clergy found that “anywhere from 23% to 58%” of the Catholic clergy have a homosexual orientation. Other studies find that approximately half of American priests and seminarians are homosexual...Moreover, the percentage of gay men among religious congregations of priests is believed to be even higher...At issue at the beginning of the twenty-first century is the growing perception—seldom contested by those who know the priesthood well—that the priesthood is or is becoming a gay profession...Gay seminarians are likely to feel at home and at ease in a seminary with a significant gay population. They feel they belong and their need for meaningful, deep relationships with other gay men is easily met, and because they instinctively recognize other gay seminarians, circles of support and camaraderie are quickly formed...The straight seminarian meanwhile, feels out of place and may interpret his inner destabilization as a sign that he does not have a vocation to the priesthood.¹³

One wonders just how the men who are studying for the priesthood—having been presented with such high ideals as their identity with Christ—can stay in the seminaries and colleges when they meet the stark reality of a gay subculture and of abnormal sexuality. To answer that problem one has to consider the pressure put on sons by their mothers, in particular, and also the fact that youth, because of their inexperience, are more easily snared. Through this devastating experience and the horrendous guilt it engenders, they become trapped in the very vices they would have abhorred prior to entering the seminary. Two hooks catch the Catholic youth. First, the Catholic Church teaches that celibacy is a way to share the rich experiences of Christ, and second, that through this tradition, which they are to hold as sacred, they are caught in a lifestyle that seems to be unbreakable.

Why then is it that we have a continuation of the Catholic priesthood and a continuation of the horrors that are being foisted on Catholics? The answer is that the Catholic Church is one huge monolithic dictatorial system that continues to plow forward in spite of what is apparent. She continues to uphold her teaching regarding the identity of Christ and the priest, and continues to say that priests are “other Christ.”

The well-known novel, *The Power and the Glory*, by Catholic author Graham Green, shows the life of a Latino priest sunk in sin—not only drunk with liquor, immersed in immoral living and his teeth yellowed from nicotine, but still being honored among the people as one who gave them Christ’s forgiveness for sin in confession and baptized their babies to new life in Christ. In real life, the Catholic priesthood ideal continues even if tarnished. Young men are continually struck, as it were, in their vital organs by the “dual disease,” lust for power and abnormal sexual lust. And Rome’s official teaching is that a priest’s sinfulness does not obstruct the grace that flows through him and his sacraments:

This presence of Christ in the minister is not to be understood as if the latter were preserved from all human weaknesses, the spirit of domination, error, even sin. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. While this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of grace.¹⁴

Men Freed from the Priesthood—*Far From Rome, Near to God: the Testimonies of Fifty Converted Catholic Priests*,¹⁵ gives first-hand documentation that men from many different nations across the world were freed from the priesthood and from the Church of Rome. Why was it that they obtained their freedom and so many more did not? If you read the testimonies of these men, you will notice that some began inquiring in the book of Hebrews where they saw quite clearly that Christ's priesthood was unique to him. Part of the way in which I saw the light was by reading one of our famous Catholic scholars, Raymond E. Brown. In his remarkable book, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections*, Brown declares,

When we move from the Old Testament to the New Testament, it is striking that while there are pagan priests and Jewish priests on the scene, no individual Christian is ever specifically identified as a priest. The epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the high priesthood of Jesus by comparing his death and entry into heaven with the actions of the Jewish high priest who went into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle once a year with a blood offering for himself and for the sins of his people (*Hebrews 9:6-7*). But it is noteworthy that the author of Hebrews does not associate the priesthood of Jesus with the Eucharist or the Last Supper; neither does he suggest that other Christians are priests in the likeness of Jesus. In fact, the once-for-all atmosphere that surrounds the priesthood of Jesus in Hebrews 10:12-14 has been offered as an explanation of why there are no Christian priests in the New Testament period.¹⁶

This noted Catholic author declares that there are no Christian priests in the New Testament. This came as a shock to me, for when I read it, I was a Catholic priest. All my hopes, the investment of my whole life was in the priesthood. It was what I had sought after and achieved, and was the source of my revenue. It was that in which I obtained honor and respect from people. I was utterly astounded that one of our famous authors could state that Christian priests did not exist in the New Testament and the only priesthood was that of Christ!

Reading Brown's book caused me to remember back to the year in which I studied as a priest in Rome. We had over three hundred young priests in my class. I could see that, for the most part, they were interested neither in a holy life nor in seeking to magnify Christ Jesus. Rather, most of these men were interested in getting high positions in different nations across the world. It was a real scandal to me to see with my own eyes men who had no interest whatsoever in the priesthood, except as a means for position and renown.

The Lord's Call to Ministry and Marriage—The Catholic Church completely rules out marriage for its priests:

A cleric who attempts even a civil marriage incurs an automatic (*latae sententiae*) suspension; but if he is given a warning and he does not have a change of heart and continues to give

scandal, he can be punished gradually with various deprivations, even to the point of dismissal from the clerical state.¹⁷

It is a serious thing for a priest to attempt marriage. Rome is arrogant enough to call this a “scandal.” But the Word of God upholds marriage as “honorable” (*Heb 13:4*). Scriptural qualifications for a “bishop” (elder, pastor) are:

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) (*1 Tim 3:1-5*).

The gift of celibacy is spoken about by Christ as a gift that is given only to a few. The time and circumstances of that celibate life are solely between the Lord and the individual.

For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (*Matt 19:12*).

The celibate life is not a condition for ministry, but “he that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” Paul did teach that it was fitting for the unmarried to remain single, if this was one's “proper gift”—“I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God” (*1 Cor 7:7*). He also gave the reasons why the single state was preferable. “He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife” (*vv 32-33*). Yet his final word of caution is clear and forceful, “But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (*v9*). This is consistent with Christ's own admonition, “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given” (*Matt 19:11*). Therefore to make celibacy a law for those in ministry is utterly unbiblical. This, however, is precisely what the Church of Rome does.

While recognizing that virginity is not of the nature of ministry, the Vatican is bold enough to declare that priestly celibacy is a “sacred law.”

Virginity undoubtedly, as the Second Vatican Council declared, “is not, of course, required by the nature of the priesthood itself. This is clear from the practice of the early Church.” But at the same time the Council did not hesitate to confirm solemnly *the ancient, sacred and providential present law of priestly celibacy*.¹⁸

Thus Rome contradicts the very Word of God and tempts the Lord in what they do to young men. The whole purpose of the Vatican, Pope, Cardinals, and Curia is to maintain control over priests worldwide. They have imposed the law of priestly celibacy so they can continue their control of men who, if they were married, would be responsible for their children, property, households, and most of all for their conscience. Rome has tempted God in upholding an untrue priesthood, and additionally, by bringing her youth into an atmosphere where they are waylaid by immoral lusts.

Who is Your Priest?—The priesthood of Christ is glorious like himself. It is the priesthood in which he has offered to the Father all that he is. It is his final finished work in which the glory of his person will shine forever. As priest, he has done all that was necessary to put away the sins of all of those who will believe in him. He has provided for them both the forgiveness of all their sins and his own perfect and righteous standing before God. At Calvary he declared, “It is finished!” Finished was the believer's slavery to sin and the true moral guilt that attends his sin! Paid was the price of the believer's redemption! Performed were all the requirements of God's law. In a word, complete satisfaction has been made to God for everyone who comes to God through him.

The Catholic priesthood, in contrast, is dust, smoke and mirrors. Like the well-known allegory of the king's new suit, it simply does not legitimately exist! Believe on the eternal priest that gives life now, and forever! “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way” (*Heb 10:19-20*). This is the living way. It is death to attempt to come to God through earthly sacrificial priests who have no place in the New Testament. The way to the eternal Father is through the eternal priest alone; his death is for us the way to life. To those who believe this, he is precious.■

—Adapted from the Book: **CATHOLICISM East of Eden**
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THE MYSTIQUE OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD

One wonders what remains of the glory of the Catholic priesthood in face of worldwide scandals, in particular those occurring recently in the U.S.A. For example, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported (*7/7/03*) under the heading, “Clergy Sex Abuse: Justice Must Come for the Bishops,”

That there are some sinful priests should not itself cause a crisis of faith. In fact, it is a matter of Catholic faith that all men and women are born sinners—and priests are not immune from sin or human nature. But the number of victims and the years that this abuse spans is simply staggering. The real outrage is that it took so long for these men to be brought to justice and that this abuse was allowed to go on for so long. And that is no accident...How does one begin to understand how such a problem could have been allowed to fester for so long? The nature of a celibate all-male clergy, the culture of secrecy and the inclination to protect their fellow priests certainly played a central role.

The Massachusetts Attorney General published a report (*7/23/03*) stating that the Roman Catholic abuse scandal in Boston most likely involved more than 1000 victims:

The Attorney General's investigation revealed that the magnitude of the Archdiocese's history of dergy sexual abuse of children is staggering. Records produced by the Archdiocese reveal complaints regarding at least 789 victims. When information from other sources is considered, the number of alleged victims who have disclosed their abuse likely exceeds 1000. The magnitude of the Archdiocese's history of clergy sexual abuse is equally shocking if evaluated in terms of the number of priests and other Archdiocese workers alleged to have sexually abused children since 1940. The investigation revealed allegations of sexual abuse of children made against at least 237 priests and thirteen other Archdiocese, 202 allegedly abused children during Cardinal Law's tenure as Archbishop.

The *Dallas Morning News* reported in August 2003:

Roughly two-thirds of top U.S. Catholic leaders have allowed priests accused of sexual abuse to keep working, a three-month *Dallas Morning News* review shows. The study—the first of its kind—looked at the records of the top leaders of the nation's 178 mainstream Roman Catholic dioceses, including acting administrators in cases where the top job is vacant...Most protected priests were accused of sexually abusing minors—primarily adolescent boys, but also younger ones, and a sizable number of girls of various ages. The newspaper's study also covered behavior that indicated a sexual attraction to minors, such as viewing child pornography or, in one case, trading sexually charged e-mails with someone a priest believed was a minor.¹

As Catholic sex abuse scandals have entangled the U.S.A., similar events have despoiled families in other nations.

From Canada to Australia, South Africa to Hong Kong, and across Europe from Ireland to Pope John Paul II's native