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## Linacre Institute Symposium - The Clerical Sexual Abuse Crisis: Introduction

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# Linacre Institute Symposium

## The Clerical Sexual Abuse Crisis

### Introduction

by

Eugene F. Diamond, M.D.

About forty years ago we observed Catholic theologians and ethicists who began to dissent from the authentic teaching of the Church on marriage and human sexuality. Contraception was justified through the separation of the procreative end of marriage from its unitive aspect. By the time Paul VI issued the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* against contraception in 1968, it had been assumed and taught by dissenting theologians that contraception was justified in marriage for a variety of reasons. This was the first but highly significant widespread deviation from Catholic sexual doctrine.

Next came the justification of sexual intercourse outside of marriage. This was based on a notion that sexual pleasure is necessary for one's fulfillment including persons who were not able to marry. If the unitive and procreative ends of the sex act could be separated it was not necessary that the partners be married. It was a short step to the opinion that because sexual intercourse could be engaged in for pleasure only, there was no persuasive reason why the sexual partners had to be of different sexes. Since sex was now separated from procreation and marriage, why could not persons with same sex attraction attempt at bodily union with each other in a "stable" relationship?

The widespread dissent from magisterial teaching gave rise to writings such as *Human Sexuality* by Anthony Kosnik (Paulist Press, 1977). The message of this book was that fornication, adultery, and homosexual sodomy were not intrinsically evil acts but rather sexual taboos. Kosnik's message that "priests must understand that God surely is present in homosexual relations that are marked by sincere affection" soon reached the libraries and classrooms of many Catholic seminaries and institutions of higher learning along with similar publications by Father Charles Curran.

Dissident teaching provided intellectual cover for deviant behavior. The authentic teaching of the magisterium on the issue of homosexual acts is found in the *Declaration on Sexual Ethics* from the Congregation on the

Doctrine of the Faith in 1975 and the *Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* in 1988.

Contrary opinions regarding the legitimacy of homosexual acts were being taught in seminaries and Catholic colleges similar to the heterodox positions taken on contraception and pre-marital sex. According to case histories described in Michael Rose's "Good Bye, Good Men", seminarians who endorsed magisterial teaching on sexual ethics were singled out for ridicule as "rigid" and unfit for ordination.

Because of widespread defections from the priesthood following Vatican II and a dramatic drop off in the number of candidates for the seminary, there was, apparently, an increased tolerance for the admission of homosexual candidates and allegedly even a solicitation of candidates with same-sex attraction in some places (Ivan Fucek, S.J., Apostolic Penitentiary).

Contrary to attempts by the press and media to characterize the present child abuse crisis as the result of "priest pedophiles", the inescapable reality of the matter is that the perpetrators are in fact almost entirely homosexual pederasts. The report of a 40-year survey in Chicago by the Cardinal's Commission on Clerical Sexual Misconduct arrived at the conclusion that "The overwhelming number of cases involved homosexual ephebophiles that is, priests attracted to young teen age boys" (Page 21, Commission Report, emphasis in the original). The rate of pedophilia calculated for the entire archdiocesan population of priests over a 40-year period was 0.045% which is probably lower than the general population. This confirms the data published by Jenkins in his book *Priests and Pedophile*, 1945.

While procedural safeguards such as "zero tolerance" are important in dealing with recognized offenders, they are more oriented toward damage control than prophylaxis.

Numerous authors have called attention to the homosexual subculture in the priesthood (P. Shaugnessy, S.J., "The Gay Priest Problem", *Catholic World Report*, 1999, J. Berry, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation*, 1992, Mary Eberstadt, *The Elephant in the Sacristy*, 2002). The extent to which the solution to the present crisis involves the reduction of the potential for homosexual pederasty deserves the serious attention of the bishops. There has been an organized systemic defiance of the Church's teachings on sexuality. Those not prepared to keep their vows should be laicized for the good of the Church.