

## **IN PERSPECTIVE: CLERIC SCANDALS**

Welcome to the House for all – saints and sinners. We all need our Savior, Jesus Christ, as we struggle as imperfect being in a fallen world. Conversion is a constant state of becoming until we are transformed in holiness. Christ picked twelve apostles but one Judas Iscariot became a traitor. During his Passion, only John, the Beloved Disciple, stood by at the foot of the cross. St. Paul described the spiritual warfare: “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate” (Rom 7:14-15). In every age, Satan is set on to destroy the Church. There were casualties but the Church always survives because of her divine nature. In recent time, society has been in steep decline due to drugs, moral decadence, broken homes, indifferentism and general relativism. The Church in the world is not totally immune from it. Satan is again swift to launch a blanket attack against Christ’s Church as a whole. Protestants also seized the opportunity to indict Catholicism. Not to exculpate or minimize the impact of sins, the scandal of the cleric sexual misconduct must be put in perspective and social context.

Almost all the priests who abuse children are homosexuals. Celibacy is not a factor. As reported in the authoritative work by Penn State professor and non-Catholic Philip Jenkins, it was determined that between 0.2 and 1.7 percent of priests are pedophiles. The figure among the Protestant clergy ranges between 2 and 3 percent. (Philip Jenkins, *Pedophiles and Priests* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 50 and 81).

In a 1993 survey by the *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 14 percent of Southern Baptist ministers said they had engaged in —inappropriate sexual behavior (Teresa Watanabe, —Sex Abuse by Clerics—A Crisis of Many Faiths,|| *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 2002, p. A1).

According to a 2000 report to the Baptist General Convention in Texas, studies done in the 1980s revealed that 12 percent of ministers had —engaged in sexual intercourse with members|| and nearly 40 percent had —acknowledged sexually inappropriate behavior|| (Terry Mattingly, —Baptists’ Traditions Make it Hard to Oust Sex-Abusing Clergy,|| *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, June 22, 2002, p. C2).

The American Medical Association found in 1986 that one in four girls, and one in eight boys, are sexually abused in or out of school before the age of 18. Two years later, a study included in *The Handbook on Sexual Abuse of Children*, reported that one in four girls, and one in six boys, is sexually abused by age 18 (Michael Dobie, —Violation of Trust,|| *Newsday*, June 9, 2002, p. C25).