

# The Battle Against Pedophiles

Father John Catoir JCD - 8/20/18

For centuries the clergy of all faiths have attracted deviants and con-artists who need to cloak a of respectability to win the trust of their victims. We must do a better job of weeding them out. The outrage over the pedophile sexual abuse scandal in Pennsylvania is not strong enough, these crimes are beyond horrific. Support for the betrayed victims is our priority. Everyone is ashamed and devastated by this scandal especially the good priests who detest these crimes and are often painted with the same brush. This terrible evil, which has stained the face of Christ must be eliminated.

In the past, the Bishops dealt with sex abuse cases the way they dealt with alcohol abuse: repentance, forgiveness, re-habilitation, and recovery. Then, after a period of re-hab, a psychiatrist would write a letter to the effect that the priest was ready to return to active duty. Bishops thought this policy of mercy would work, as it did with alcoholic priests. They were wrong. It failed miserably with pedophiles and is no longer considered valid. Today, many bishops are immediately turning sex-abuse accusations over to the police and letting law enforcement authorities determine if the charges are credible. If the-priest is found guilty, he is sent to jail. Some of them have committed suicide, many have resigned from the priesthood knowing their career is over anyway.

The Pennsylvania Grand Jury deliberated over cases going back 70 years and found 300 guilty priests. During that period there were about 30,000 priests who lived and died in the six Dioceses of Pennsylvania during that period: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Greensburg, Altoona, Erie and Harrisburg. 300 priests represent one percent of the total. Bishop Donald Trautman, the Bishop of Erie, Pennsylvania from 1990 until his 2012 retirement at age 76, wondered if the Grand Jury told the whole story. He said, "I neither condoned nor enabled clergy abuse. Rather I did just the opposite. My time spent as Bishop of the Diocese addressing sexual abuse has been the most demoralizing, trying and pain-filled experiences of my life. I have seen first hand how the terrible acts of the clergy abusers devastate the lives of innocent victims."

He commended the grand jury saying, "They rightfully chastised clergy who committed horrible crimes against children, but unfortunately did not emphasize the concrete steps Church leaders took to correct and curtail abuse and help victims." The Bishop said that his record includes disciplining, defrocking and ultimately laicizing pedophile priests. "It 'also includes efforts to provide care and support for victims," which statement he supported by appending many letters from victims expressing gratitude for his pastoral care. I know Bishop Trautman to be a straight shooter, and a champion of the laity. He's one of many bishops who is reversing the failed policies of the past.

The battle must go on. Let's also pray for everyone concerned: the victims and their parents, the priests - both innocent and guilty, and all those who have left the Church because of this scandal. May the Lord continue to be their strength and their joy.