

Conspiracy of Silence in Sacramento Catholic Diocese

Posted by [Katy Grimes](#) at 1:03 am on Aug 01, 2018 in Flash Report

The conspiracy of silence in the Catholic Church over scandals involving sex, homosexuality, cover-ups, payouts, betrayal, and corruption have left many Catholics disillusioned and even angry.



The coat of arms of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento.

Corruption wears many disguises, including liturgical garments.

There is a cancer in the Catholic Church that needs to be eradicated. The cancer is not Catholicism, rather it is about the dangerous, corrupt behavior in too many of the Bishops. The traditional role of a bishop is as head of a diocese – the buck stops with the Bishop.

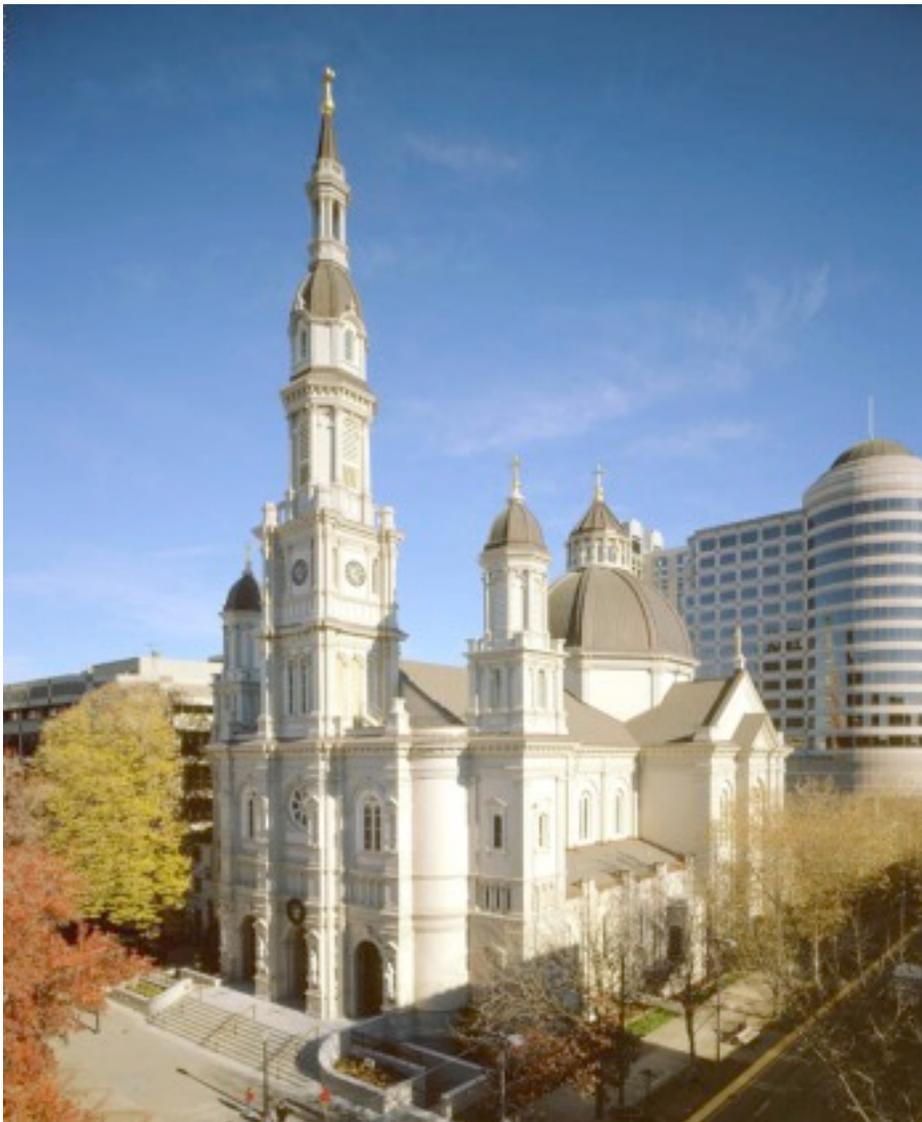
The recent exposure of the sexual abuse and predatory lifestyle of Cardinal Ted McCarrick of Washington D.C. was overdue. The Harvey Weinstein-like situation where “everyone knew” of “Uncle Ted’s” decades of predatory behavior “that involve unwanted touching of minors and seminarians, strange costumes, familial nicknames, and the Cardinal demanding that young men share his bed. Stories that involve “gay sex parties at the bishop’s residence”, and other things we’d rather not contemplate,” OnePeterFive **reported**.

According to many Catholics, McCarrick was just the tip-of-the-iceberg. “Even as the moral corruption of McCarrick becomes undeniable, the question of the networks that supported and covered his actions have taken on a pressing

urgency,”OnePeterFive **reported**. “Those responsible for keeping silence are men who continue to serve in the Church.”

McCarrick’s case has only piled on to the decline and denial of the Catholic Church, and the gross selfishness by bishops and cardinals bent on protecting themselves at the expense of the sexual abuse victims, as well as parishioners throughout the world.

Sacramento Bishop Jaime Soto is one such cover-up agent, according to many area Catholics – not just many Catholics, but every Catholic in the Sacramento area I’ve spoken to says this. The Sacramento Diocese stretches from the Oregon border to Vacaville. In 2009, there was a massive retirement of area priests only one year after Jaime Soto was named bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento.



Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacramento

Declining attendance in many of Sacramento's Catholic Churches is but one symptom. The morale of Sacramento's priests is as low as it gets, I am told. Many are retiring early – nine last year – and there were zero young priests ordained to fill their shoes.

“If you don't have any other options, then the people in authority over you have quite a bit of coercive power,” a priest **wrote** to Rod Dreher at *The American Conservative*. “The bishop has financial power over you, spiritual power, power of assignment, power to suspend, power to send for psychological assessment, etc.”

The priest continued: “Now ideally, if a bishop is righteous, this would all work out for the good of the priest. But what if he isn't? Or what if the priests in his curia who are advising him are corrupt? If you are a priest in such a diocese what are you to do?”

Indeed. What if the bishop is corrupt? What if he is abusing his all-powerful authority over everything and everyone in his diocese? What if he is covering up crimes by corrupt priests?

Strife and Betrayal in Sacramento Diocese

Recently I met with Dave Leatherby – yes, that Dave Leatherby, who together with his wife Sally and large family owns and operates **Leatherby's Family Creamery**. Dave is a devout Catholic, and we met to discuss Sacramento's Diocese, Bishop Jaime Soto, and what Leatherby describes as a serious morale problem within the diocese.

“People are stopping going to church,” Leatherby said. But it's not because they are losing interest in Catholicism, he explained. “It's leadership; there are lots of unhappy Catholics.”

Leatherby's grandson, Fr. Jeremy Leatherby, is a priest, and was the parish priest of Presentation of The Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. But he is on the “outs” with Bishop Soto.

Leatherby explained: A few years ago a long-time housekeeper at St. Philomene's walked in on the parish priest having sex with another priest. She was threatened and told to be silent. But instead, she told Dave Leatherby, Jr – Dave's oldest son – a **Deacon** in the Church. Leatherby, Jr. took this information to a trusted Vicar in the diocese. But the reaction wasn't what it should have been. “He exploded,” Leatherby said. The next thing they knew, Leatherby Jr.'s son, Fr. Jeremy was given two hours to vacate the rectory where he lived, and was placed on “suspension” on a charge of having sex with a female parishioner. Leatherby Sr. said the woman has recanted her story, but Fr. Jeremy is still on suspension, having been in limbo for two-and-one-half-years without a hearing. “Bishop Soto will not respond to Fr. Jeremy's canonical lawyer, and won't allow a hearing. Yet the bad priests are still in their parishes.”

“Bishop Soto wants him laicized (defrocked),” Leatherby Sr. said. “And this speaks to the treatment priests have gotten in this diocese when they speak up

about this issue. Bishop Soto is covering up and protecting bad priests, abusing the good priests, and this causes unhappy parishioners.”

“If you’re not on the ‘in’ of the sex ring, they will allow you to be destroyed,” Leatherby Sr. explained. “If you don’t agree with the political agenda, they push you out.”

“At the Bishop level, it’s a swamp,” Leatherby Sr. said. “The sex problem has made it newsworthy, but it’s the power-mad Bishops who are terrifying priests. They’ve forgotten that they are still priests.”

“This needs to be investigated and exposed,” Leatherby, Sr. added. “They (Diocese) beat the crap out of Father Dan Madigan, founder of the Sacramento Food Bank.” He named several other local priests who were targeted by Bishop Soto:

“Father Kiernan was accused of mishandling money. Father John Hansen, a 47-year priest was ousted on a 50-year old accusation in Ireland (the accuser is dead). Soto pulled him from the priesthood. Father Bill Frazier was accused falsely of sex allegations. It was proven not true, but Soto never did anything to clear his name before he died.”

He took me back to the time when he and several others started Catholic Radio in Sacramento. Priests all over Sacramento were against it – because it was conservative – more conservative than many priests were comfortable with.

Sacramento Diocese: Conspiracy of Silence?

I spoke with Kevin Eckery of the Sacramento Diocese, and asked him about Fr. Jeremy Leatherby’s legal case and status. Eckery said they generally don’t talk about existing cases. “He’s been represented by canonical council the entire time. We are respecting his privacy,” Eckery said.

I asked him about the corruption in the priesthood, centered on homosexuality, and said I’d been told upwards of 75 percent of priests and seminarians are homosexual. “That’s not what we see,” Eckery said. “Celibacy is celibacy.”

Eckery said the priesthood “is a reflection of the general population” in terms of homosexuality. “We ask ‘how do you help support these men with an avocation in the Church?’”

This has been the standard line of the Sacramento Diocese for a long time. In a 2010 interview in ***Sacramento News and Review***, when asked by publisher Jeff vonKaenel about a story on gay priests and gays in the seminary, quoting Catholic scholars saying that somewhere between 25 and 50 percent of people in the seminary are gay, Soto replied, “I don’t think that that is true. I guess I haven’t looked at the research that closely, but I would doubt that from my own experience. It would probably reflect the numbers in the general population, whatever that is.”

“That would put you in the minority for people commenting on this issue,” vonKaenel said. “Well, I haven’t looked at the research—that’s my own sense about it; I don’t think that it’s more than the general population,” Soto said again.

As for the pedophilia scandal which the church has endured since 2002, Leatherby Sr. said is really is a scandal of homosexuality. The vast majority of cases are not with children but with young men past the age of puberty. Very few of the allegations against the church are pedophilia or with women.

I asked Eckery about local cases, settlements and payouts. “Like a lot of other dioceses, the bulk of the settlements were 12 to 13 years ago,” he said. “There were five, and we paid out just under \$40 million. The master settlement case of 2005, settled all of the claims brought forward until then. Twelve dioceses in California settled in 2005, 2006 and 2007.”

“In terms of sex abuse cases, the vast majority were settled in 2005,” Eckery said. “I know the statute of limitations has run, but there have been cases settled outside of court cases, because it’s the right thing to do.”

“There have been other lawsuits and issues,” Eckery said. “Like real estate cases, or employment cases. The Diocese runs a lot of secular business.”

Next — Part II: “Queering the Catholic Church:” A Sinful Network of Bishops

Letter From A Frustrated Parish Priest

By [ROD DREHER](#) • [July 4, 2018, 2:43 PM](#)



[Aaron Amat/Shutterstock](#)

A Catholic priest wrote me this e-mail, and gives me permission to publish it if I withhold his name and identifying details, which I have done (I checked him out; he is who he says he is). This letter really does give you a look at the situation from the other side:

I've been considering some of the same things you have, why don't more priests who have been victims not speak out? Ultimately, I believe it's not much different from the story of the single mom. [Note: a story I told about a single mom who reported vile behavior by a parish priest for whom she worked, but who wouldn't go public because she knew it would cost her her job working for the Church — RD] As priests we have dedicated decades to one career and most of our education is only applicable in Church work. Ultimately our bishop has almost unlimited power over us. Yes, we are supposed to have some rights that ought to be protected and can appeal to the Congregation for the Clergy, but we all know that our bishop can send us into limbo with little or no financial support. And therein lies one of the main problems. We don't have the resources to hire a canon lawyer or a civil lawyer to protect our rights against our bishop. The moment we do secure their services our bishop takes that action as being disobedient, even though we have every right to do it.

A huge part of the problem is priests are stuck in their career as priests. I realize "stuck" is a strange word here. But given our relatively low pay we don't have the ability to move to another career should the difficulties as a priest become too grave. If you don't have any other options, then the people in authority over you have quite a bit of coercive power. The bishop has financial power over you, spiritual power, power of assignment, power to suspend, power to send for psychological assessment, etc. Now ideally, if a bishop is righteous, this would all work out for the good of the priest. But what if he isn't? Or what if the priests in his curia who are advising him are corrupt? If you are a priest in such a diocese what are you to do?

If you are in your 30s you might leave knowing you can start over, but if you are in your 50s?

And how do you as a priest expose corruption? There is no mechanism. Write a letter to the Nuncio? Who is he friends with? Who is going to see it? I have friends in the Vatican. I know that they are

“very concerned” about how priests are being treated by their bishops. Yet, nothing changes.

My point here is, given the backlash a priest knows he very likely will receive by exposing corruption, he will either have to be willing to put up with persecution for possibly the rest of his life or he has to be willing to leave the priesthood. This makes the stakes rather high.

It’s one thing to expose obvious abusive situations. I would do that in an instant. Hell if I found a guy abusing a kid I would put him in the hospital then and there. Then I would call the cops. Then I would call the diocese.

But it’s not the obvious large scale abusive/exploitive situations that create these conditions, it’s the culture that rises up whether in the seminary or in the chancery or wherever. So when in a chancery you get a disproportionate number of gay priests/bishops together and they become the circle of influence for well over a decade then everyone else gets frozen out? You know that you cannot effect change and you can see the corruption, as well as the gay cabal, what do you do? You realize you can’t do anything.

Then you realize that some of the men in that cabal are not even necessarily aware of their own compromised psychology and are themselves either asexual, just weird, or gay and unaware. The reality is always going to be that the sexuality of the priesthood is going to mirror the sexuality of the culture. The same issues and problems with sexuality in the culture are going to be present in the priesthood because they are the same problems present in families and among all men whether they be fathers or priests. I know this to be true because I hear confessions.

As you note, however, when there are severe power imbalances is when you get exploitive and predatory behavior. If I had to point to one thing that is the biggest problem it would be the almost absolute power of bishops over their priests with priests having little to no ability to report the abuse of that power. Bishops keep us in check with the laity when they get complaints. Bishops don’t like complaints and that’s probably a good thing because it does keep some kind of check on priests. But there is nothing checking the bishop’s power.

Look at the herculean effort it took in Memphis to get some kind of response. It takes a full on diocesan revolt to get any kind of action. The reason is because if one priest brings a concern forward his bishop

can ruin his career and life. He can make him miserable for years. And why would a guy want to do that to himself? Instead, you learn how to work within the system and keep the bishop happy. This is the sad reality I have come to after around two decades of being a priest.

Being prophetic and believing the Catholic Church is this force for good in the world? This great proclaimer of truth? Sometimes, maybe. But since I was ordained the Church has become more and more of a joke to the world. As an institution it appears to be far more corrupt than I ever imagined. So much so that, had I known, I would never have become a priest in the first place. I feel like I was totally duped. Then again, I am hopeful that more of this corruption bleeds out. It's the only way to get back on track.

Keep up the pressure!

Also in today's mailbag, this from a laywoman:

I care, but I don't recognize the Church that you write about. I recognize some of it. Archbishop Thompson is a poster child for some of it. But two-thirds of priests are gay? And most of them aren't chaste? And they are spending all our money on their rectory and European vacations? Really? Not here on planet parish council. Here, you find yourself wishing the new pastor would get a dog because he seems so lonely. I suspect a lot more day drinking alone than sex with someone else. Not to say it doesn't happen.

I have three friends who have left. Two left over celibacy — both heterosexuals — and one over money (A brother had been supporting his mother and mentally disabled sister became an invalid himself after a terrible car accident). I don't understand where you get your ideas about the priesthood. I understand they are not a bunch of saints, but it is not the mission district YMCA or an episode of *Gossip Girls*. It is more like a bunch of guys who want to be saints but found themselves being small business owners instead.

They have to run the school, maintain the buildings, say the mass, listen to the bitching old people, pretend to be our psychotherapist, and committees and committees (the horror) — all while getting us to pay for it all — millions every year. We demand the priest's individual attention, a good homily every week and children free from the public school thug life at a price we can afford. If we don't get it, we are pissed. This makes some priests lonely and

depressed, with feelings of being persecuted by those they serve. That can lead to bad personal decisions, like fancy vestments, or worse.

You should put something more real out there. I worry about priests because of their humanity rather than their inhumanity.

Funny, but since the McCarrick thing broke, I've been getting a fair number of "keep the pressure up" e-mails — almost all of them come from priests who are sick of what they see on the inside, but feel gagged for the reasons the anonymous priest above does.

UPDATE: Reader Francis writes:

To the priest(s) writing to Rod, please tell us laypeople what they can do. We are praying for you, and the devout members of the younger generation are especially furious. We have kept the faith and battled the many forms of anti-religion, particularly from the Left, and we hate the fact that we feel powerless to help fight the battles within our own Church. But we are willing to fight. We want to help you, but we do not know how. Politics and power struggles within the Church are even more opaque than politics within the American government. Please tell us step-by-step what we can do. What do I say if I attend a parish council meeting? How do I hold my bishop accountable? There is a critical mass of people who will hold the feet of the corrupt and complacent to the fire. Please tell us how to help. We are praying for you, and now we are ready to fight for/with you and the Church of our beloved Savior. Help us muck the stalls.

That's a great set of questions. I'd love to hear the answer from you priests who want and need help.

UPDATE.2: This just came in. I'm posting it with tears in my eyes. These men are hurting so much! I've very slightly edited this to protect his identity:

I have been reading your articles as of late regarding the McCarrick Scandal. I saw myself in your article entitled "Letter From a Frustrated Parish Priest." As a priest in a diocese that is, sadly, riddled with corruption, manipulation, and bullying of priests on the part of the bishop and chancery staff, I can testify that for many of us, this is EXACTLY THE SITUATION in which we find ourselves.

In this diocese the bishop has protected his own which led to scandal when the local media found out about it, and resulted in unnecessary and completely avoidable scandal. Priests, like myself, who called the bishop to account were called in before diocesan

lawyers and threatened with canonical sanctions. There were panels who went around questioning priest about who “leaked” the information. Some of us retained our own counsel, both canonical and civil, which seemed to scare them away. Others have been sent for “evaluations” and not returned for a long time. Those, like myself, who were not sent away for “help” with “anger issues” have been *persona non grata*. It’s a sad situation.

Everybody knows about the corruption, but nobody will do anything. The vicar general knew, the judicial vicar knew, chancery staff knew, and **NOBODY HAD THE GUTS TO DO ANYTHING**. Those of us who choose to risk our priesthood to do something, were/are punished. It has created a major divide in the presbyterate here, and priest morale is at an all time low. There is a somewhat cautious hope that things will get better when the bishop retires, but there is also great nervousness because of who Francis will appoint. Many of us are worried it will only get worse.

I guess my point is this: you are right. There is a very serious problem in the Church. Bishops are no longer fathers to their priests, but are more like corrupt police officers who are willing to give a beating to those who risk exposing their corruption, or as one priest I know describes them: they are like alcoholic fathers, who at moments can be very fatherly, but after a few drinks berates you and gives a few belt shaped welts on your backside.

Thank you for writing this. Thank you a thousand times. **SOMEONE** needs to say something. It is my belief, that given the way things are, that the laity must stand up and defend their priests. The Church needs a true “age of the laity” where the people in the pews rise up and demand holy, competent and healthy bishops!

Here’s why the tears: because I know personally good and faithful Catholic priests. I know what they have to deal with, and how they have more to suffer *from* the Church than *for* the Church. I have been to [Norcia](#), and seen holy Catholic priest-monks, and what a light they are to the world (I pay tribute to them in [The Benedict Option](#)).

And I know all too well how much our declining, despairing civilization desperately needs the witness of *all* faithful Christians, especially Catholic ones.

It doesn’t have to be this way! Does it?

UPDATE.3: The priest I just quoted has now sent in a response to Reader Francis's questions:

What do I say if I attend a parish council meeting?

Be very clear in your support of your priest – if he is worthy of your support. Make clear to him that you will support wholeheartedly and with your pocketbook the good things he wants to do. Tell him that you WANT him to do the right thing. Tell him that you want clear teaching that is THE CHURCH's teaching and not his own. Make sure he has what he needs to live a relatively healthy life (for instance make sure his rectory is reasonably nice, that he has the technology he needs, that he has a decent car that will be reliable, that he is eating healthy, and getting exercise). You would be surprised at how many people complain when Father seeks to improve living conditions, eat healthy – which means he isn't eating the cheap processed food – or takes time off to be with friends, family, and get some healthy recreation. Defend him to your friends who gossip about him. Don't let people push him around.

How do I hold my bishop accountable?

Demand answers. Write letters to him. Write letters to his priest council and college of consultors. Hold their feet to the fire too. Write to the Nuncio. Write letters to the editor calling out his corrupt behavior and demand he resign if his corruption calls for it – sometimes bishops will only listen when corruption becomes public. Call out those around him who are helping to cover for him, or are enabling him. Support victims of corruption with moral support, but also with money – getting a lawyer to defend oneself isn't free. Do not be afraid of them because they are powerful and a spiritual leader. Also, if you are blessed with a good bishop, affirm him, tell him you appreciate the good he is doing, give donations to the diocese. Make your approval known just like you make your disapproval known.

UPDATE.4: The first priest quoted in this post responds:

What can the laity do?

If you think you have a good priest, then support him in every way that is healthy. Make sure he doesn't burn out, which is the biggest danger for priests.

But how does the corruption stop at the episcopal level? How does the Church change? When a priest is mistreated the laity often never find out. They receive notice that he has resigned his parish over health reasons and then is reassigned somewhere else some months later. No one is ever told why and the priest is told to not say anything because he knows he will be further punished if he does. Sometimes this mistreatment happens without parishioners even knowing. Some spurious accusation happens to a priest and the bishop demands he gets a psychological evaluation. He disappears for a week to undergo a humiliating extensive psychological evaluation of which all of the data is put in his file. If that facility recommends further treatment the priest must submit to it. If he doesn't the bishop will suspend him indefinitely. If he doesn't submit to the evaluation the bishop will suspend him indefinitely. I am referring to situations that have nothing to do with child sexual abuse. Remember the Church teaches a priest cannot be compelled to undergo psychological testing against his will. Bishops do this all the time. They use it like a weapon, they also use it to protect themselves from liability and to satisfy the whims of insurance companies. Priests are being sent off to these places constantly. These are psychological hospitals where they also keep child abusers and other predatory priests. So regular priests who have no issues of any kind like that, have to live with serial abusers and men with very significant psychological issues all because their bishop needs to cover his liability or is using it as punishment for a priest.

What can the laity do? They need to demand change from the top down. Bishops have to have some kind of accountability about how they treat their priests. There has to be some kind of review of their processes and practices. A priest can file a complaint to the Congregation for the Clergy, but to do so is career suicide and takes a long time to resolve. It's hardly worth it. What needs to happen is some kind of independent review board/commission that looks at these practices and evaluates the bishops and reports back to Rome. Something like that. This can only happen if the laity gets Rome's attention. And that can only happen if people with the right influence

and the right amount of financial leverage get involved. The truth is that this kind of thing will not happen unless the richest Catholic population in the world makes it happen. But if they want it to happen, it will happen. If the laity want change. Stop giving money and make your demands clear.

UPDATE.5: I just received an e-mail from the first priest (the one who wrote the initial comment), who asked to make some clarifications:

In reading some of the comments it is clear that there are some misunderstandings about the nature of the problems.

#1. I do not know of any current abusive situation in my diocese involving children or vulnerable adults. Nor am I aware of any being covered up. My letter isn't referring to known situations of child abuse. A point I thought I was rather clear about.

#2. The nature of the problem isn't just A or B. Child sexual abuse happening or not happening. Child sexual abuse is just the worst element of the problem.

#3. The next level of the problem is the pervasive number of homosexual priests and bishops. What does a priest do in such a situation knowing the existence of such men? The existence of which isn't necessarily a problem until they use their power against other priests or it becomes exploitive toward other adults.

#4. It is this abuse of power by bishops, which isn't necessarily connected to homosexuality but often is, which becomes highly problematic. This is where bishops can protect certain priests and punish others. Where certain priests are punished for being too orthodox and others for speaking out too strongly on certain issues, like corruption, etc.

#5. The conservative/orthodox Catholics have to get it through their heads that this is not a conservative/liberal issue. It's a power issue. Some of the gayest bishops I know are favorites of the "conservative Catholics". If you only knew. Homosexual priests and bishops hide behind orthodoxy for a reason.

#6. The other thing that conservative Catholics have done a disservice to priests is that they have demanded bishops be tough on priests. As if being tough on priests in general would stop them from being abusers. Consider how ill conceived that idea is? What has happened

is it has helped bishops excuse themselves to break canon law and church teaching in their dealings with how they treat their priests.

#7. Here's the point that people may not want to look at. Statistically a child has a much better chance of being abused by their own father or a relative or teacher than a priest; someone who has not taken a vow of celibacy. The data is there.

UPDATE.6: Reader Sebastian:

I am a Catholic priest. When I became a priest I was full of idealism, optimism and naiveté. Now, decades later, I am more realistic, more discouraged and struggle not to be cynical. I haven't observed the division between gay and straight priests, or between a lavender cabal and the rest of the presbyterate. What I have observed is this:

1. Recruitment and formation of diocesan priests favors "company men" who reflexively adopt the "company line" of thought. Venturesomeness, thinking outside the box, and innovation are discouraged and often punished. Most often the punishment is subtle, just a hard to put one's finger on pattern of undesirable assignments, of being left off committees, and being without influence, etc. Sometimes the punishment is more clear.

2. All the power is with the bishop and with those he appoints as his inner circle. If one doesn't kowtow, one doesn't advance. And a priest can't simply move to another company. The bishop controls what job a priest has, where he performs that job, what his working and living conditions are, and whether and when he can retire. I have seen priests "banished" into insignificant or unpleasant jobs and living conditions.

3. There is an extreme, and extremely dangerous, tendency to abhor all criticism, all negative assessment, and all complaints. The "good pastor" is the one about whom no one complains to the diocese. So the "good pastor" does not challenge his parishioners, limits all innovation, allows stagnation, allows godparents and sponsors who are not qualified, and tries to give every parent what they want in terms of religious education (even when those parents don't come to church and don't contribute to the parish). If a priest does not try his utmost to keep peace at any price, there are consequences to his reputation, his career, and his personal life. Keeping the status quo

will not renovate the institution, but introducing any sort of change will draw fire. So nothing changes.

4. As horrible of the sexual abuse of children is, and as unconscionable as hiding that abuse is, these things are just part of the larger dysfunctional system that rewards a “see no evil (or negative or troubled or problematic), hear no evil, say no evil” mentality. That is true of abuse, but also true of just about everything else. Priests and church employees are rewarded for saying that we live in the best of all possible worlds, and many come to think that this is true, despite ample evidence to the contrary.

5. There are few objective standards of success or failure, and those things that are used as standards are, at best, unreliable indicators. Are collections up? Is Mass attendance down? Are baptisms up? RCIA patterns? In general, these measures are ok. But there are times when a challenging message, or national patterns, or local situations, affect them far more than anything the priest does. So how does he measure his own productivity? What is success? And how do diocesan officials measure him?

6. Psychological stressors in the priesthood are high. Most priests are given great responsibility without the power or authority to do very much about the things for which they are responsible. The standards of success are vague. And every priest knows that any any time he may be asked to change his job and his residence on three or four weeks notice.

7. Before ordination I worked in academe, for non-profits, and for the government. I have never elsewhere experienced the ineptitude and lack of fair employee policy and standards that exist in the Church in regard to priests. There is no standard of conduct. There is minimal evaluation. There is no real appeal or any evaluation or decision by diocesan administration.

8. Finally, consider the difference between a Catholic priest and a married Orthodox priest or married Protestant minister. There is a line beyond which his superior cannot push a married man, because the married priest or minister has to give precedence to his wife and family. Celibate Catholic priests have no such bright line. A married clergyman may also have a financial advantage if his wife has a separate career that can be a sort of safety net allowing a change of

career and a measure of financial independence from the diocese or denomination. A celibate priest does not.

Fr. Perozich responds:

Write a letter to your pastor and bishop (not just a nasty email) to tell him how he helps your faith or how he is destroying it. Send a copy to the nuncio.

You see how we priests can be sidelined, taken from ministry, and falsely accused.

You laity have no such concern. You have the power to withhold your money, to express your opinions freely in truth and charitable speech, and there is no repercussion for you. Do it every single time your faith is undermined and let the nuncio know the name of the bishop, what he said that damaged you, when it was said, give supporting written evidence if possible.

Many of these men are careerists, looking to advance to archbishop and cardinal. You can hurt their chances, but only if you act.

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