NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Study: No link between gay priests and sex abuse scandal

Thomas C. Fox | Nov. 19, 2009 NCR Today

It has been so unfair. Elements in our Catholic community have repeatedly placed the blame of the sex abuse scandal that has rocked our church at the feet of a gay clergy.

It has been a case of guilty until proven innocent.

Now, during their annual meeting this week in Baltimore, the US Catholic Bishops reviewed a preliminary version of a study they commissioned on the reasons for clergy sexual abuse.

The study by John Jay College of Criminal Justice researchers has found that being gay had no correlation to the sex abuse scandal.

In a presentation to the bishops on Tuesday, Margaret Smith of John Jay said: "What we are suggesting is that the idea of sexual identity be separated from the problem of sexual abuse. At this point, we do not find a connection between homosexual identity and the increased likelihood of subsequent abuse from the data that we have right now."

This allowed Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of the LGBT Catholic group DignityUSA, to say she welcomed "the news for gay people, gay priests, and our families and friends."

She said the John Jay report confirms other studies in concluding that sexual orientation is not connected to pedophilia or other sex crimes.

"We hope that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church will finally accept this finding, since it has been borne out through their own study," Duddy-Burke said.

According to some reports, there have been some 14,000 claims of abuse and the cost to the church is running at about $2.6 billion in settlements since 1950.

DignityUSA is the nation?s oldest and foremost organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics. Founded in 1969, the organization has members and chapters throughout the United States.

By and large, Dignity chapters are not allowed to meet on church property -- and this, too, is a scandal that should haunt us to the core of our souls.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/30/2014 - 07:04*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/study-no-link-between-gay-priests-and-sex-abuse-scandal