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Key quotes from National Review Board's 'causes and context' report

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WASHINGTON -- Here are some key quotes from the report titled "The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010," released May 18 in Washington.

- "The problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests peaked in the 1970s, with a decline by the mid-1980s in all regions of the Catholic Church in the United States."
- "Some percentage of priests will be vulnerable to sexually abuse children. Although a vulnerability or predisposition may exist in general, this situation does not imply that it is possible to either identify specific 'causes' of the abusive behavior or identify specific individuals who will commit acts of abuse."
- "The failure to recognize the harm of physical or sexual abuse was not atypical in American society generally in the late 1970s and 1980s."
- "(It is) crucial to recognize that the abuse was concentrated in the 1960s and 1970s, and that those generations of Catholic priests were vulnerable without having had either a careful preparation for a celibate life or the understanding of the harm of sexual abuse that is now part of the overall culture."
- "Over the past 25 years, a remarkable intensification of human formation and deeper understanding of the importance of its role are evident in almost every seminary. Over the same period, the total number of accusations of sexual abuse of a minor by a Catholic priest has fallen."
- "Prior to 1984, the common assumption of those who the bishops consulted was that clergy sexual misbehavior was both psychologically curable and could be spiritually remedied."
- "Situational crime prevention strategies are opportunity-reducing measures directed at highly specific forms of crime."
- "The priest-abusers saw themselves as able to fulfill the role of priest even as they lived the life of an abuser."
- "Priests who were ordained prior to the 1960s who had a 'confused' sexual identity prior to ordination were more likely to sexually abuse minors than those who clearly identified with a particular sexual identity from those cohorts.
- "After the 'Five Principles' were affirmed (by the bishops) in the early 1990s, there was general consensus that a response to sexual abuse was necessary; yet diocesan implementation varied considerably. This pattern is consistent with innovation in organizations in general."
- "Pope Benedict XVI's recent and highly publicized support for accountability and transparency regarding abuse victims and hierarchical neglect should encourage Catholic dioceses to continue to complete their innovation in response to and prevention of sexual abuse of minors."

Editor's Note: The full text of the John Jay report is now available as a pdf file: **Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010** [1]

For more coverage of the John Jay report, see:

- **Bishops at center of abuse scandal, and potential reform** **[2]**, RNS, May 18
- **Report spreads blame for Catholic sex abuse** [3], RNS, May 17
- **Diocesan programs help build 'safety barriers' against child abusers** [4], CNS, May 18 2011
- **No room for complacency in protecting children from abuse, bishop says** [5], CNS, May 18 2011
- **US bishops say new John Jay report on abuse key to understanding issue** [6], CNS, May 18 2011
- **Key quotes from National Review Board's 'causes and context' report** [7], CNS, May 17 2011
- **Key events in US church response to clergy sex abuse crisis** [8], CNS, May 17 2011
- **Bishops' child protection officer looks to church's next steps on abuse** [9], CNS, May 17 2011
- **Misperceptions of abuse problem common, John Jay report says** [10], CNS, May 17 2011
- **Major recommendations from 'causes and context' report on abuse** [11], CNS, May 17 2011
- **Causes and context report released on clergy sexual abuse of minors** [12], CNS, May 17 2011

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[1] http://www.usccb.org/mr/causes-and-context-of-sexual-abuse-of-minors-by-catholic-priests-in-the-united-states-1950-2010.pdf
[2] http://ncronline.org/node/24726/
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