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Pope Francis supports zero tolerance of child abuse

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Pope Francis

Pope Francis is on record as supporting zero tolerance for the sexual abuse of minors by priests. In a 2012 interview [1], then-Cardinal Bergoglio said that a bishop called him for advice on how to deal with it, and "I told him to take away the priests' licenses, not to allow them to exercise the priesthood any more, and to begin a canonical trial in that diocese?s court."

He went on to say that he was unconcerned about the impact on the image of the church. "I do not believe in taking positions that uphold a certain corporative spirit in order to avoid damaging the image of the institution." He was critical of the earlier practice in the United States of moving priests to a different parish. "It is a stupid idea; that way, the priest just takes the problem with him wherever he goes."

He noted that Pope Benedict supported "Zero tolerance for that crime" and admired "the courage and uprightness of Pope Benedict on the subject." He says, "we must never turn a blind eye" to abuse. "You cannot be in a position of power and destroy the life of another person."

In the interview, he argues that celibacy is not the cause of pedophilia. "More than seventy percent of cases of pedophilia occur in the family and neighborhood: grandparents, uncles, stepfathers, neighbors. The problem is not linked to celibacy. If a priest is a pedophile, he is so before he is a priest."

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[1] http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/documents/in-2012-interview-cardinal-bergoglio-says-he-favors-keeping-celibacy-582001
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