



Background on Ruth Institute Study on The Role of “Sexual Orientation” in the Clerical Sex Abuse Scandal in the Catholic Church

To properly understand the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church, certain issues must be confronted with an uncompromising commitment to learning the truth wherever it leads us. In keeping with this commitment, on November 2, 2018, The Ruth Institute released “Is Catholic clergy sex abuse related to homosexual priests?” a new study *casting doubt* on two widely-held assumptions about clerical sex abuse.

First -- That the problem has been completely controlled by the “Dallas Charter for Child Protection” – which sets boundaries on interactions between clergy and Church workers and minors – adopted by the Bishops in 2002. **To the contrary, The Ruth Institute study shows a disturbing recent increase in the number of sexual incidents reported since 2010.**

Second -- That the abuse problem in the Church has nothing to do with “sexual orientation.” **To the contrary, The Ruth Institute study shows a strong correlation between the percentage of self-described homosexuals in the Catholic priesthood and incidence of sexual abuse of minors by the clergy.**

Additionally, this study – conducted by Fr. Paul Sullins, Ph.D., and published by The Ruth Institute – is groundbreaking in its use of recently available data.

1. This study utilizes data from the 1100-page report by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury released in August 2018. The Ruth Institute thoroughly analyzed the incidents covered in that report and created a data file suitable for statistical analysis.
2. This study utilizes some of the data previously collected in 2004 by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (covering the years 1950-2002) and graciously released by the College for this analysis. The study also incorporates the more recent reports collected under the terms of the aforementioned Dallas Charter.
3. This is the first study of Catholic clergy sex abuse to take advantage of the data on the percentage of homosexual clergy, gathered by *The Los Angeles Times* in a 2002 survey.

Ruth Institute President, Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D., said “This groundbreaking study sheds new light on sexual abuse within the Church by putting it in the proper perspective – one that isn’t politically correct but crucial to understanding the true nature of the scandal.”

Fr. Paul Sullins added: “I am grateful to The Ruth Institute for its foresight and leadership in sponsoring this important research. My report is not the last word on this subject. Hopefully, today's report and

the data on which it is based will be the beginning of a deeper discussion on clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church."

Fr. Sullins continued: "The data file compiled from the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report is available at our new website (ruthinstitute.org/clergy-sex-abuse) dedicated to gathering and analyzing information about the clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. We invite other researchers to take advantage of the opportunity to use this data."

Fr. Sullins' full report is also available on our new website at ruthinstitute.org/clergy-sex-abuse-statistical-analysis.

The Study Shows That:

1. Sexual abuse among Catholic clergy is still a problem. Since peaking 35 years ago, it has declined much less than commonly thought. The decline is consistent with an overall drop in sexual assault in American society.
2. Since 2002, abuse has been rising amid signs of complacency by Church leaders, and today is comparable to what it was in the early 1970s.
3. The concentration of homosexual men in the priesthood rose from twice the concentration in overall population in the 1950s to eight times the general population in the 1980s. This trend was strongly correlated with increasing child sex abuse.
4. A quarter of priests ordained in the late 1960s reported the existence of a homosexual subculture in their seminary, rising to over half of priests ordained in the 1980s. This trend was also strongly correlated with increasing child sex abuse.
5. Four out of five victims over age 7 were boys; only one in five were girls. Ease of access to boys relative to girls accounts for about one-fifth of this disparity. The number of homosexual priests accounts for the remaining four-fifths.
6. Had the proportion of homosexual priests remained at the 1950s level, an estimated 12,000 fewer children, mostly boys, would have suffered abuse.



[The Ruth Institute](http://ruthinstitute.org) is a global non-profit organization equipping Christians to defend their beliefs about the family, to create a culture of lifelong married love. The Ruth Institute has responded to the latest round of clergy sex abuse revelations by encouraging the laity to do two things:

- *Insist on justice regarding clergy sex abuse. That includes punishment for the guilty, protection for the innocent and restoration for the victims, as far as humanly possible.*
- *Proclaim the full truth of the Church's teaching on marriage, family and human sexuality.*

Only by doing both these, can we put an end to the scourge of clergy sexual abuse.

To schedule an interview with Dr. Morse or Fr. Sullins, contact: media@ruthinstitute.org