

# WORLD & NATION

## Expert: All denominations have clerical abuse

By Michelle Laque Johnson  
Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA — Although Catholic priests may be getting the most publicity about allegations of sexual abuse of minors, they are far from the only clergy guilty of such misconduct, according to a professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University.

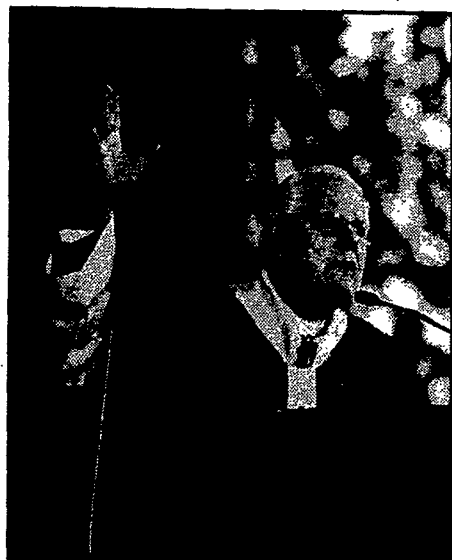
"You name me a denomination and I'll give you a case," Philip Jenkins told *The Catholic Standard & Times*, Philadelphia archdiocesan newspaper. "Some (denominations) with huge problems include Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Jews, Baptists, Pentecostals, Episcopalians — you name them."

Jenkins' 15 books include *Pedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis*, published in 1996 by Oxford University Press.

One of the most extreme cases of clergy sex abuse in U.S. history involved a Pentecostal minister named Tony Leyva, who molested several hundred boys in the 1980s, Jenkins said. But few Americans have heard of Leyva, he added, while some molesters who are former Catholic priests have become household names.

Jenkins attributes that not to anti-Catholicism, but to various groups within the Catholic Church who have agendas unrelated to the sexual abuse scandal.

"In the 1980s, as cases came to light, it was very often Catholic factions themselves



Reuters/CNS

**Boston Cardinal Bernard F. Law prays March 29 for victims of sexual abuse by priests. Although sexual abuse by priests may be in the news of late, they are not the only clergy guilty of sexual misconduct.**

who made this out to be a Catholic issue," he said. "Liberals within the church said, 'See, this is a dreadful problem. It shows what happens when you don't have women priests.' Conservatives said, 'This shows what happens when you have gay priests.' This was adopted by the secular press."

Jenkins said that although the term "pedophile priests" came into usage in the mid-1980s, the problem should have more properly been called "pedophile pastors."

The "pedophile priests" phrase "defines the issue and makes it far more limited than it really is," he added. "In fact, most of the clergy who misbehave are not priests."

"My view is there is no evidence that Catholic clergy offend at a higher or lower rate than other clergy or than nonclergy that deal with children," Jenkins said. "There's no evidence either way. If somebody says, 'Well, it's obvious, they do,' I say, 'Fine, give me the evidence,' and the evidence isn't there."

Patricia Kelly of Kelly Counseling and Consulting in Glen Mills, Pa., agrees that other denominations have at least as high an incidence of sexual misconduct problems as the Catholic Church.

A number of years ago, Kelly said, she participated in a treatment program for clergy with sex abuse problems. "Most of the clergy that were there were not Catholic clergy," she said. "They were Protestant clergy. Most clergy that abuse are ministers, but the (Catholic) Church is sexy. It sells papers."

Writing in the March 3 issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Jenkins cited an unnamed Anglican diocese in Canada that "is currently on the verge of bankruptcy as a result of massive lawsuits caused by decades of systematic abuse."

That case refutes the argument that the sex abuse problem stems from the practice of celibacy, he said, since "the Anglican Church does not demand celibacy of its clergy."

In the United States, a \$1.2 million judgment in 1991 against the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado in a sexual misconduct case brought by a woman led the Church Insurance Co., which insures Episcopal dioceses, to mandate certain safeguards that are considered among the strictest in the country.

Jenkins said "a bold and thorough self-study" of clergy misconduct was done by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago in the early 1990s. It looked at every priest who had served in the archdiocese for the past 40 years — some 2,200 individuals — and "reopened every internal complaint ever made against these men."

"The standard of evidence applied was not legal proof that would stand up in a court of law, but just the consensus that a particular charge was probably justified," he wrote. "By this low standard, the survey found that about 40 priests — about 1.8 percent of the whole — were probably guilty of misconduct with minors at some point in their careers."

"Put another way, no evidence existed against about 98 percent of parish clergy, the overwhelming majority of the group," he added.

In the *Post-Gazette* article, Jenkins said he is "in no sense soft on the issue of child abuse" and "cannot be called a Catholic apologist, since I am not even a Catholic."

"But I am worried that justified anger over a few awful cases might be turned into ill-focused attacks against innocent clergy," he wrote. "The story of clerical misconduct is bad enough without it turning into an unjustifiable outbreak of religious bigotry against the Catholic Church."

## Violence

Continued from page 1

toxic nuncio in Israel and apostolic delegate in Jerusalem (Archbishop Sambini) to make every opportune diplomatic initiative," Navarro-Valls said.

Also, he said, the Vatican Secretariat of State was in diplomatic contact with the U.S. and Israeli governments, with the Arab League and the Palestinian authorities.

In an early morning interview April 2, Salesian Father Franco Ranzani, who lives at Bethlehem's Don Bosco School, said the fighting "is intensifying now and there is a

barrage of gunfire."

Speaking to MISNA, a Rome-based missionary news agency, the priest said: "I don't have the courage to go out onto the terrace because the local radio has advised people not to go out of their homes. The Israelis are shooting at anything that moves."

"It is incredible, just incredible what is happening under our very eyes," said Father Ranzani, who has worked in the Holy Land for more than 35 years.

In the *Avvenire* interview, Archbishop Sambini said neither Israelis nor Palestinians seem to have the courage to take their eyes off the past and look toward the future.

"Yesterday you did this to me; today I'll do this to you" is the message under their

actions, the archbishop said.

"But 'What will we do tomorrow?' No one asks that question," he said.

Pax Christi International, a Belgium-based Catholic peace organization, called for an immediate halt to the Israeli invasion of Palestinian territories and to suicide bombings by Palestinians.

The Catholic peace group, whose international president is Latin-rite Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem, made a similar appeal to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and other world leaders March 29.

However, Pax Christi said, at this point only international intervention can bring the calm needed for the resumption of talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

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**Thoughts to Consider**

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**What are some ways to help a child who has lost a parent?**

First it is important to make sure the child is honestly included in all information and planning. This means being honest about the death and answering the child's questions. It also means allowing but not forcing children to go to the funeral or visitation as they wish. Secondly, a child needs love and security. Let a child know they will be cared for, take an interest in schoolwork and include them in play. Some children resent being pressured to accept burdens beyond their reach. "Taking over for Dad or Mom" may be too much responsibility. Naturally, changes will occur but a child needs time and help in adjusting to them.

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