

Letter by Sheila Stevenson
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As a member of the Roman Catholic faith I am appalled at the revelations on child sexual abuse that have been coming forth over the last several years. I myself was sexually abused by my biological father, and blamed and punished for it by my biological mother - both upstanding church people. Secrecy is what has allowed child abuse and child sexual abuse to flourish for centuries. It is now time for institutions that have previously to this date covered over their sins and crimes.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to enter into a Roman Catholic Church because underneath all the tenants of the Mass, and scripture readings is a dark and horrible secret - and hypocrisy is rampant, at the altar, and in every pew, in every church. Just the other day I received an emailed recording from a fellow parishioner in which it says that homosexuals are pedophiles. NO! That is wrong. First of all, homosexuals are born that way, and everyone born into this world is a pure gift from God. Heterosexuals are also pedophiles - my own father being one. Hypocrisy rules in this area as well. We "the people" are told horrible things about homosexuals, and yet apparently 50% of the priests and those in the Vatican of the Roman Catholic Church are homosexuals. They are also children of God.

Every church in the world has pedophile pastors and ministers, and yet the words in the Bible are twisted and used against children who are abused by them. Jesus said to "suffer the little children to come unto me". Really? Who translated any version of the Bible that uses the word suffer - which in a weird and sick way can even allow pedophile priests to use that as an excuse to harm. Oh, and the translation that talks about "the woman in adultery"? Last I heard, adultery is committed by both a woman AND a man. This speaks to

the on-going and disgusting misogyny in the Roman Catholic Church, and many other churches as well. The Jehovah's Witness faith requires that any child who is abused by their faith leaders or congregants provide two 'witnesses' to their sexual abuse. That is beyond horrible for the individual. Sexual abuse is done in secret. There are not witnesses. So, again, the child is not believed. Children do not know about sexual activity. What they proclaim happened needs to be believed.

The most important things are: the child needs to be believed - and comforted; the child needs to get help from 'trauma-informed' and compassionate therapists - and those costs need to be borne by the involved; and, the child - and their family - need to receive both verbal and written sincere apologies.

This scourge, of sexually abusing innocent children - Gifts from God - will never end as long as institutions like the Roman Catholic Church keep sweeping the reality of it under the rug, and reading out impotent and uninformed letters.

The Roman Catholic Church is supposed to be a Christian body of believers in Jesus Christ. Well, I wonder what Jesus would do to the church today if He were here.

Change needs to happen, and it needs to begin now.