

Mary's School of Prophecy

The Church and the Scandal of Sexual Abuse

By Pope Benedict XVI – Pt 3

On this program we will continue our series on Pope Benedict's encyclical, "The Church and the Scandal of Sexual Abuse by Pope Benedict the XVI", and his encyclical was divided into three parts, and we've already covered the first part which was basically a general overview of the sexual revolution which was throughout the world, especially here in the United States; and how sexual morals were pretty much degraded and how it affected the Church. And in the second part which we are going to I think get through entirely today, he gives some of the problems that he had as Pope in dealing with the sexual abuse by priests and bishops and cardinals as far as that goes. And there is a lot of legalese in this and I'm not sure, I think Pope Benedict probably must have some kind of law degree because that's what he seems to be most concerned with, but it's interesting in understanding the mindset of the Pope at the time, the one who followed Pope John Paul II. I'm going to review the last part of our program yesterday where Pope Benedict seemed to be talking about refuges, but first we need to say the prayer.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, send now Your Spirit over the earth. Let the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of all nations that they may be preserved from degeneration, disaster and war. May the Lady of All Nations, the Blessed Virgin Mary be our Advocate, Amen. Please note Mary calls herself the Lady of all Nations, not globalism, not one nation, not One World Government, but nations, plural. So let's continue.

Let's just review the last verse that we talked about in the last session, where he seemed to be talking about refuges. Listen to this. This is what I call verse 31.

31 Faith is a journey and a way of life. In the old Church, the catechumenate was created as a habitat against an increasingly demoralized culture, in which the distinctive and fresh aspects of the Christian way of life were practiced and at the same time protected from the common way of life. I think that even today something like catechumenal communities are necessary so that Christian life can assert itself in its own way.

Do you suppose that is what Pope Benedict was telling us? Wasn't he saying that we need to prepare for refuges? I think that's very likely what he was saying. In any event I think we can now start this second part and here's what he said. **"In the second part, I aim to point out the effects of this situation"**, that is the sexual revolution, **"on the formation of priests and on the lives of priests."** And he calls it, **"Initial Ecclesial Reactions"**. So let's start with the next part.

32 The long-prepared and ongoing process of dissolution of the Christian concept of morality was, as I have tried to show, marked by an unprecedented radicalism in the 1960s. This dissolution of the moral teaching authority of the Church necessarily had to have an effect on the diverse areas of the Church. In the context of the meeting of the presidents of the episcopal conferences from all over the world with Pope Francis, the question of priestly life, as well as that of seminaries, is of particular interest. As regards the problem of preparation for priestly ministry in seminaries, there is in fact a far-reaching breakdown of the previous form of this preparation.

So Pope Benedict prepared this encyclical as a warning or it's a letter to the bishops who had their conference this past spring. Remember the American bishops were going to deal with the question, but Cardinal Cupich stood up and said, "No, no, no, don't do anything. Let the Vatican handle it." So the Vatican supposedly handled it, but I haven't heard anything from the Vatican, so I think Pope Benedict's encyclical fell on deaf ears. So let's go to the next one.

33 In various seminaries homosexual cliques were established, which acted more or less openly and significantly changed the climate in the seminaries. In one seminary in southern Germany, candidates for the priesthood and candidates for the lay ministry of the pastoral specialist [Pastoralreferent] lived together. At the common meals, seminarians and pastoral specialists ate together, the married among the laymen sometimes accompanied by their wives and children, and on occasion by their girlfriends. The climate in this seminary could not provide support for preparation to the priestly vocation. The Holy See knew of such problems, without being informed precisely. As a first step, an Apostolic Visitation was arranged of seminaries in the United States.

So we're getting a picture of the problem, that I think he's going to say came during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II. I'm not sure whether this particular instance he's talking about occurred during John Paul II or during his pontificate. Let's look at the next one, verse 34.

34 As the criteria for the selection and appointment of bishops had also been changed after the Second Vatican Council, the relationship of bishops to their seminaries was very different, too. Above all, a criterion for the appointment of new bishops was now their "conciliarity," which of course could be understood to mean rather different things.

Verse 35:

35 Indeed, in many parts of the Church, conciliar attitudes were understood to mean having a critical or negative attitude towards the hitherto existing tradition, which was now to be replaced by a new, radically open relationship with the world. One bishop, who had previously been seminary rector, had arranged for the seminarians to be shown pornographic films, allegedly with the intention of thus making them resistant to behavior contrary to the faith.

Isn't that ludicrous? I think he is talking about Rembert Weakland in Milwaukee. Rembert Weakland stole over \$400,000 from the diocese to pay off his live-in boyfriend and he was never charged. He should have been charged with grand larceny. He should have been exposed. He did write a book admitting that he was gay. He's still alive by the way. He's 92 years old. You can rest assured that his retirement is being paid for out of the collection basket. The Church has not cracked down on these people like they should have. The latest scandal of last year with Cardinal McCarrick; he was drummed out but I'll bet you that his retirement is paid for by the faithful. Let's look at the next part of Pope Benedict's exhortation, verse 36.

36 There were — not only in the United States of America — individual bishops who rejected the Catholic tradition as a whole and sought to bring about a kind of new, modern "Catholicity" in their dioceses. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that in not a few seminaries, students caught reading my books were considered unsuitable for the priesthood. My books were hidden away, like bad literature, and only read under the desk.

Isn't that comical ? The seminaries in the United States; they wouldn't let the seminarians read Pope Benedict's books? You can see how bad things were in the seminaries and undoubtedly still are; verse 37.

37 The Visitation that now took place brought no new insights, apparently because various powers had joined forces to conceal the true situation. A second Visitation was ordered and brought considerably more insights, but on the whole failed to achieve any outcomes. Nonetheless, since the 1970s the situation in seminaries has generally improved. And yet, only isolated cases of a new strengthening of priestly vocations came about as the overall situation had taken a different turn.

So will Pope Benedict now give us examples of his difficulties in getting these rotten apples out of the bushel?

38 The question of pedophilia, as I recall, did not become acute until the second half of the 1980s. In the meantime, it had already become a public issue in the U.S., such that the bishops in Rome sought help, since canon law, as it is written in the new (1983) Code, did not seem sufficient for taking the necessary measures.

39 Rome and the Roman canonists at first had difficulty with these concerns; in their opinion the temporary suspension from priestly office had to be sufficient to bring about purification and clarification. This could not be accepted by the American bishops, because the priests thus remained in the service of the bishop, and thereby could be taken to be [still] directly associated with him. Only slowly, a renewal and deepening of the deliberately loosely constructed criminal law of the new Code began to take shape.

So I don't think this had to do with Rembert Weakland, but with that kind of a bishop showing pornographic movies to seminarians, it's no wonder that there were cases of homosexuality and pedophilia in the seminaries, and Pope Benedict continues; verse 40.

40 In addition, however, there was a fundamental problem in the perception of criminal law. Only so-called guarantorism, [a kind of procedural protectionism], was still regarded as "conciliar." This means that above all the rights of the accused had to be guaranteed, to an extent that factually excluded any conviction at all. As a counterweight against the often-inadequate defense options available to accused theologians, their right to defense by way of guarantorism was extended to such an extent that convictions were hardly possible.

In other words Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict were really hampered in trying to drum these rotten bush apples out of the bushel, although I do think that at least they were exposed. In a way that's one of the good things that came out of the sexual revolution in the Vatican 2 Conciliar Church is that these people were exposed . Verse 41:

41 Allow me a brief excursus at this point. In light of the scale of pedophilic misconduct, a word of Jesus has again come to attention which says: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:42).

Well now Pope Benedict gives a very interesting interpretation of that phrase, "the little ones", which I had never thought of, so this is kind of interesting what he says next.

42 The phrase "the little ones" in the language of Jesus means the common believers who can be confounded in their faith by the intellectual arrogance of those who think they are clever. So here Jesus protects the deposit of the faith with an emphatic threat of punishment to those who do it harm.

Well that's kind of interesting. I had never thought that "the little ones" that Jesus was referring to, referred to those who are, let's say immature in the faith or the average Joe in the pew. I still think it could also mean the little ones as children, but it's interesting and I can see where that's possible to think of "the little ones" as people who are new in the faith. Let's continue.

43 The modern use of the sentence -- (*that is that "the little ones" are children*) -- is not in itself wrong, but it must not obscure the original meaning. In that meaning, it becomes clear, contrary to any guarantorism, that it is not only the right of the accused that is important and requires a guarantee. Great goods such as the Faith are equally important.

Well it's interesting how Pope Benedict thinks here. I would say kind of legalistically, but he's right. The faithful or those who are new in the faith or who are not advanced in the faith; their rights are equally important as the rights of the accused in these cases. And these pedophile clerics or homosexual parents who are prelates, people like Father James Martin, they may have a right to freedom of speech, but we lay faithful have a right to hear the truth which people like that are not doing. Verse 44:

44 A balanced canon law that corresponds to the whole of Jesus' message must therefore not only provide a guarantee for the accused, the respect for whom is a legal good. It must also protect the Faith, which is also an important legal asset. A properly formed canon law must therefore contain a double guarantee — legal protection of the accused, legal protection of the good at stake. If today one puts forward this inherently clear conception, one generally falls on deaf ears when it comes to the question of the protection of the Faith as a legal good. In the general awareness of the law, the Faith no longer appears to have the rank of a good requiring protection. This is an alarming situation which must be considered and taken seriously by the pastors of the Church.

And if you listen to Michael Voris, he's talking about this all the time. He's saying that these rotten prelates, priests, bishops; they are undermining the faith of the faithful and this is as much of a crime as is their own personal foibles. And the Church has got to understand that these people should be kicked out of the priesthood, not because they don't need help, but because the Church has a duty to protect the lessons which are being given to the faithful. Verse 45:

45 I would now like to add, to the brief notes on the situation of priestly formation at the time of the public outbreak of the crisis, a few remarks regarding the development of canon law in this matter.

46 In principle, the Congregation of the Clergy is responsible for dealing with crimes committed by priests. But since guarantorism dominated the situation to a large extent at the time, I agreed with Pope John Paul II that it was appropriate to assign the competence for these offences to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, under the title *Delicta maiora contra fidem*.

And let's continue.

47 This arrangement also made it possible to impose the maximum penalty, i.e., expulsion from the clergy, which could not have been imposed under other legal provisions. This was not a trick to be able to impose the maximum penalty, but is a consequence of the importance of the Faith for the Church. In fact, it is important to see that such misconduct by clerics ultimately damages the Faith.

And as I say, if you watch Michael Voris, he's continually complaining about people like Father James Martin, who are invited by many bishops to speak in their dioceses, in their parishes, and he is undermining the true Catholic faith. He should be drummed out of the priesthood for the exact reasons that Pope Benedict is talking about here.

48 Only where faith no longer determines the actions of man are such offenses possible.

49 The severity of the punishment, however, also presupposes a clear proof of the offense — this aspect of guarantorism remains in force.

And of course Pope Benedict is right. You still have to respect the rights of the accused. I mean there are priests who have been falsely accused. Let's continue. This is the last section, verse 50.

50 In other words, in order to impose the maximum penalty lawfully, a genuine criminal process is required. But both the dioceses and the Holy See were overwhelmed by such a requirement. We therefore formulated a minimum level of criminal proceedings and left open the possibility that the Holy See itself would take over the trial where the diocese or the metropolitan administration is unable to do so. In each case, the trial would have to be reviewed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in order to guarantee the rights of the accused. Finally, in the Feria IV (i.e., the assembly of the members of the Congregation), we established an appeal instance in order to provide for the possibility of an appeal.

51 Because all of this actually went beyond the capacities of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and because delays arose which had to be prevented owing to the nature of the matter, Pope Francis has undertaken further reforms.

Well good luck with that Pope Benedict. I've never heard of any reforms. I'm quoting from Michael Voris. The issue of Cardinal McCarrick has not been addressed by the Vatican. As far as I know his retirement is still being paid for by the Church. By the Church, I mean us, and there's been no attempt to find out what went wrong to correct the situation. How in the world was he ever made a priest, much less a bishop, much less a cardinal? Well I am not so familiar with that. I recommend watching Michael Voris as far as that goes.

Okay well that completes the second part of Pope Benedict's encyclical and I think it's valuable for us to read and understand the historicity behind it and it's also interesting to read what the Pope himself who was dealing with the problems, what he thought about it and the problems that he was facing.

Okay everybody, I think that Wednesday, tomorrow I will be continuing this and we'll start with part 3 of Pope Benedict's encyclical. So until I see all of you again may all of you have a very blessed day and may God bless all of you.

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Links:

Full text of Benedict XVI essay 'The Church and the scandal of sexual abuse'<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-of-benedict-xvi-essay-the-church-and-the-scandal-of-sexual-abuse>

Links (cont.)

Archbishop Weakland stole more than money, he stole the faith - <https://crisismagazine.com/opinion/archbishop-weakland-stole-more-than-money-he-stole-the-faith>

Theodore McCarrick - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_McCarrick

How McCarrick got away - <https://crisismagazine.com/opinion/how-mccarrick-got-away>

Catholic priest sentenced to Federal prison on child pornography charge - <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/catholic-priest-sentenced-federal-prison-child-pornography-charge>

The devilish cunning of Fr. James Martin - <https://crisismagazine.com/opinion/the-devilish-cunning-of-fr-james-martin>

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