

REASON FOR CONCERN



*For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed,
nor has anything been kept secret,
but that it would come to light...*

Mark 4:22 (Amplified Bible)

Reason for Concern

A compilation of current news articles with an editorial commentary by
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Morality in Decline

Religious views have historically defined the beliefs, hopes, and character of their professed adherents. They are “professed” in the sense that there is often a wide spectrum of adherents within each religious community—from nominal or liberal, to practicing or conservative. Moral atrocities, often committed by those identified with a religious group, are becoming increasingly apparent as the world gets “smaller” by virtue of Internet news and social media reporting of genocide, torture, systematic rape, genital mutilation, child abuse, human trafficking, etc.

Beyond the “big five” influential religions of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism, there are thousands of other religions, each based on a particular blend of doctrinal beliefs and moral values. (https://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/10/06/the_odd_body_religion/) Not only do the moral values radically differ, but compounding the matter, as just pointed out, are personal ethics ranging from liberal to conservative. Thus *doctrinal beliefs* and *moral values* are loose terminology that does not imply anything of a virtuous nature.

With this backdrop, it is not practical or even possible to assess the merits or shortcomings of every religious or cultural group, nor is that the intent of this treatise. Rather, this treatise will focus on the largest of these religious groups, Christianity, which has an estimated 2.4 billion followers. And to further narrow the assessment, the focus will be on Roman Catholicism, the largest denomination, which represents one half of so-called Christians—no small number.

Issue at Hand

Based on recent investigative reporting and law enforcement outcomes, it is very apparent that there has been a systemic issue of pedophilia within the ranks of Papacy. The word “Papacy” is used because Roman Catholicism, while a religion, is also inextricably tied to the Vatican State, the Pope being head of both a *church* (Roman Catholicism) and a *state* (the Vatican).

From one perspective, it might be expected that within a sampling of 1.2 billion adherents, even the smallest of percentages would result in a significant number of offenders. However, what clearly makes this issue far more profound is that the sampling is not among the “laity” but the “clergy,” which numbered just under 415,000 in 2016. (<https://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>) These investigations focus on the church hierarchy, a recent example being the results of a grand jury probe in

the State of Pennsylvania that alleges more than 300 priests from six dioceses sexually abused more than 1,000 child victims. (<https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/14/us/pennsylvania-catholic-church-grand-jury/index.html>) Ostensibly, law enforcement is now taking this matter far more seriously than it did subsequent to the groundbreaking *Boston Globe* report of 2002. (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/movies/spotlight-movie>) As one example of how matters will no doubt be coming under further scrutiny, the New York State attorney general's office has issued subpoenas to all eight Catholic dioceses in the state. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/09/06/new-york-joins-the-list-of-states-investigating-sex-crimes-committed-by-catholic-priests/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.90f41996687e) These issues will be addressed further on, but suffice it to say, there is valid **reason for concern**.

Why This Treatise?

So, why a treatise of this sort? The answer is threefold.

First, if one acknowledges the historicity of the Bible, including its precepts and ordinances, it stands to reason that the leadership or “clergy” of Christianity in general—and Papacy as highlighted in this paper—should exemplify the highest moral values, for they are appointed to espouse the teachings and moral values of God’s Word. When leadership does not “walk the walk” or “talk the talk,” there are both **reason for concern** and the reasonable expectation that corrective action will be taken. But if time passes and no action is taken, then logically speaking, one would expect many to leave that church or denomination over concern for the welfare of their own children or at least for conscience’ sake—particularly when parishioner donations of more than \$4 billion have been paid so far to compensate victims in the United States alone. (<https://www.collective-evolution.com/2018/05/09/the-vatican-has-paid-nearly-4-billion-to-settle-for-children-harmed-by-sexual-abuse/>)

As a sign on President Harry Truman’s desk duly noted, “The buck stops here.” In other words, responsibility in any hierarchical organization rests not just with the subordinates who are known offenders but also with their superiors and all others who are cognizant of the facts. The moral or ethical values (or the lack thereof) of leadership often are manifest in, and enable, the behavior of subordinates.

Second, it is clear, given the vast number of victims, there was at the very least suspicion, if not knowledge, that matters were grossly amiss. When congregations neglect or surrender their responsibilities, there is likewise **reason for concern**. Simple logic leads one to believe that lethargy exists among congregations. Metaphorically, their eyes are closed to what is staring them in the face, for they deal with impropriety within their own circles of fellowship by turning a blind eye—even as the three (not so) wise monkeys embody the proverbial principle “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” Such an environment is hardly godly regardless of Papacy’s assertion that it is the sole ecclesiastical institution of God.

Third, and most significantly, the testimony of Holy Writ provides compelling instruction concerning judging matters of immorality within the Church. When any level within an ecclesiastical hierarchy or organization fails to comply with God’s instructions, there again is **reason for concern**. Depending on the severity, disobedience in God’s sight can be a life-or-death matter.

A Closer Look

As reported in an article entitled “Why Is an Archbishop Calling for Pope Francis to Resign?” by Mahita Gajanan and Gina Martinez (*Time* magazine, September 17, 2018), the noted conservative Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, in a scathing 11-page letter dated August 22, has accused Francis of covering up sexual-abuse allegations against ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the former head of the archdiocese of Washington, DC. The letter “includes a screed against homosexuality...[and] connects sex abuse in the church to the Pontiff’s more accepting position toward gay Catholics.” As the authors point out, the letter “has sown division among leaders of the Catholic Church.” The article concludes by saying, “As for Francis, he has declined to address the letter. Aboard his papal plane on Aug. 26, he said that he’d read it and that ‘it speaks of itself.’ Reporters, he said, could judge the claims in the letter for themselves. ‘It’s an act of trust,’ he said. ‘I won’t say a word about it.’”

(<https://www.scribd.com/article/388046832/Why-Is-An-Archbishop-Calling-For-Pope-Francis-To-Resign>)

(<http://time.com/5380458/pope-francis-resignation-catholic-church/>)

The reaction to reports such as these is mixed—even though there is disappointment and outrage, most parishioners are willing to “weather the storm.” Thus far, relatively few have been compelled to take a stand and separate themselves from the Church. The explanation for this lack of action is not so easily discerned, and certainly it follows no logic, particularly in the light of the *Boston Globe* report outlining similar atrocities more than 15 years ago. The inaction is a classic example of the saying “Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.”

In an article entitled “Reasons to Remain in the Church” by Bill Dunn (*Republican American*; Waterbury, Conn.; dated August 23, 2018), the devout Irish Catholic author outlines his reasoning:

“Oh, dear Lord, here we go again. The Catholic Church is being rocked by more clergy sex-abuse scandals. The first time around [author’s insertion: first public disclosure], beginning in 2002 in Boston, it was shocking and embarrassing. This time, it simply is infuriating. After much weeping and gnashing of teeth, plus a lot of prayer, I have decided there are two things I will not do in response to this new scandal. The first thing I won’t do is shrug and say, ‘Well, it was an anomaly. A few “bad apples” did terrible things years ago, and the bishops will make sure it never happens again.’”

After citing the Pennsylvania scandal and the resignation of Cardinal McCarrick as “a longtime

practitioner of ‘perversion coercion,’” Dunn goes on to say that in spite of the “hierarchy trust meter” hovering near zero, “the second thing I will not do in response to these scandals is leave the church.” Dunn then gives an explanation which, in effect, hinges on his conviction that “the Catholic Church is the original church founded by Jesus.” Thus, according to his logic, where else could he go?

Those keeping abreast of the news would readily acknowledge, or be compelled to concede, that by all objective standards this immorality has never been a matter of “a few bad apples.” The 2002 *Boston Globe* report concluded that approximately 6 percent of all priests are suspect.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k60eGmxn7Rk>) Using the 2016 estimate of 415,000 clergy, one can quickly do the math and see that if the percentage holds true, there are pedophiles numbering in the tens of thousands just within the Roman Catholic clergy!

As many news outlets were in anticipation, the German Catholic Church presented the results of its investigation into the decades of sexual abuse of children. According to *The Guardian*, the September 25 report “details the cases of 3,677 children, the majority of whom are male, who were sexually abused between 1946 and 2014. About 1,670 clerics, mainly priests, are implicated.”

(<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/25/report-details-sexual-abuse-german-catholic-church>)

The systemic nature of the cover-up of these atrocities, as publicly exposed in Boston, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Australia, Chile, Ireland, Germany, and elsewhere, speaks not only to the culpability of clergy who were involved (and many continue to be involved), but more significantly to the culpability of the Church and its leadership, including the Pope.

To repeat, the concluding logic of Bill Dunn in the previously cited article suggests that he will once again weather the storm because “the Catholic Church is the original church founded by Jesus.” No doubt this logic—or a form thereof—is the same rationale that many frustrated or infuriated Catholics rely on as their excuse or justification to not leave the Church. However, as many others on the outside watch and as the tragedy unfolds, such logic begs the obvious question “Is the Catholic Church really the original church founded by Jesus?” And for those doing more personal soul-searching, the questions may be even weightier: “Am I supporting, or complicit with, a corrupt institution?” “Is there guilt by association?”

Historically, many atrocities have been committed in the name of Christ. As attention is focused principally on the Papacy, both the Crusades and the Inquisition clearly illustrate the degree of hate and the depth of depravity that professed Christians can reach when a powerful institution—the Papacy—wields its influence.

Rev. 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Rev. 18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Given time and the continued disclosure of these types of heinous crimes, there no doubt will be more obvious effects on the Roman Church. Declining membership and waning financial support are like the Biblical analogy of the overthrow of Babylon when the great Euphrates River dried up (Daniel chapter 5). This same metaphor is again alluded to in the Book of Revelation.

Rev. 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

What Say the Scriptures?

As distressing as these issues should be to all sincere Christians, they do not come as a surprise. Jesus' own words prophesied of the times and circumstances that would result in the corruption of the Church:

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you [author's notation: the true Christian] will think that he doeth God service.

What once was a channel of blessing became corrupt:

Jer. 51:7 Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

And Jesus gave the warning:

Rev. 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

A "Nicolaitan spirit," the spirit of lordship, manifested itself when strong ones (aspiring leaders or clergy later bestowed with extravagant titles of cardinal, archbishop, nuncio, etc.) took control over weaker ones (the church membership, the laity).^{1,2} Furthermore, as noted by the Apostle John, it did not take long for this spirit and other corruptions to set in:

2 Thess. 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work....

In addition to Holy Writ giving advance warning of what would happen within the leadership of Christendom, there are Scriptures that speak directly to the issues at hand. As Viganò and others have pointed out, the issue is more embracive than pedophilia—it points to homosexuality. As reports have

clearly indicated (including the Papacy's leaked report cited above), more often than not (male) predator priests are targeting boys and young men.

“Gay rights” activism has made large strides in gaining acceptance in many cultures and even within Christendom. To stifle any objections based on conscience or otherwise, secular laws have been passed to restrict “free speech” on this matter. Thus it takes determination to speak out in a public forum on the Biblical position. For those familiar with Bible prophecy, this development comes as no surprise. As the Apostle Paul pointed out in his letter to Timothy:

1 Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

1 Tim. 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

1 Tim. 4:3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Verse 2 is a “perfect fit” for those members of the clergy who have been living a double life—one life as a priest who is a “guiding light” and the other life as a perverted, habitual sex offender. Verse 3 calls attention to the long-standing practice (Canons 1250 and 1251) in the Catholic Church—until rules were relaxed in 1984—to abstain from eating meat (on Fridays) as a form of penance. The more profound observation of verse 3 is the matter of “forbidding to marry.” This verse speaks to the requirement the Catholic Church instituted (without Scriptural authority) that priests must be celibate.

A Religious News Service report of July 16, 2018, points out, “Recent news stories about financial settlements with adults who had sexual encounters with a bishop show that the issue of sex abuse in the Catholic Church is not limited to the abuse of minors. When Cardinal Theodore McCarrick was suspended from the priesthood after being credibly accused of abusing an altar boy, it was also revealed that financial settlements for his actions had been made earlier with two adults.”

[\(https://religionnews.com/2018/07/16/priests-celibacy-and-sex/\)](https://religionnews.com/2018/07/16/priests-celibacy-and-sex/)

The article then raises two questions. “There is universal agreement that those who have sex with minors should be prosecuted as criminals and expelled from the priesthood. But what about violations with adults? Are there other sexual violations that should be treated by the church with zero tolerance?” The article concludes, “The church needs a frank discussion of these issues with input from the laity. Sex between a priest and adult can be more than simply a violation of celibacy. It can also be a violation of professional ethics. With the advice of laity with expertise in these areas, the church needs to adopt best practices and hold itself to the highest standards. The church needs the help of laity not only in developing standards but also in enforcing them. No profession, including the clergy, is good at policing itself.”

While it may be true that “the church needs a frank discussion of these issues with input from the laity,” the real crux of the matter is whether the clergy and the laity recognize that the Scriptures are the “highest standards” and should be enforced.

The Bible describes the seriousness of the issue in very plain terms. In the Old Testament under the Mosaic Law, this behavior was what would be described today as a “capital offense.” However—while this behavior is no less abhorrent in God’s sight—in the New Testament with the advent of Christ and those taking the name “Christian,” there is a path to reconciliation with God.

Lev. 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. (ESV)

Lev. 20:13 If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. (ESV)

1 Cor. 6:9,10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice **homosexuality**, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (ESV)

1 Tim. 1:9,10 ...the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice **homosexuality**, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine. (ESV)

Rom. 1:26,27 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women **exchanged natural relations** for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise **gave up natural relations** with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (ESV)

One may conclude that “forbidding to marry” has contributed, to a lesser or greater extent, to sexual immorality being finally disclosed today. The world is now witnessing what was prophesied thousands of years ago—that “hidden things of darkness” are being exposed and brought “to light.”

1 Cor. 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Certainly other factors and nuances could be discussed in an exhaustive analysis of a subject of this nature, but suffice it to say, there is **reason for concern**.

Concluding Thoughts

The Apostle Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, highlighted many of the issues observed today—not only in a worldly setting but even in Christendom:

2 Tim. 3:1 You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come.

2 Tim. 3:2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

2 Tim. 3:3 inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good,

2 Tim. 3:4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2 Tim. 3:5 **holding to the outward form of godliness** but denying its power. Avoid them! (NRSV)

As Jesus warned, the time of the judgment of ungodliness in the near future will have certain similarities to the circumstances leading up to Noah's flood (Luke 17:26,27) and the circumstances that eventually forced Lot to flee from Sodom before its destruction (Luke 17:28,29). This latter example is very much akin to the immorality outlined above.

Gen. 19:4 Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both **young and old**, the whole population, surrounded the house.

Gen. 19:5 They called out to Lot and said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can have sex with them!" (CSB)

Ultimately those who aspire to be in harmony with God not only need to be vigilant in watching their own behavior but also need to take the necessary steps for extrication from any environment not of a godly nature. Both are sober responsibilities. As noted in the life of Charles Chiniquy (1809-1899), who for 25 years (1833–1858) was an ordained priest in the Church of Rome in Canada and the United States, his excommunication and departure took years and much heartache, similar to Martin Luther's exit from Romanism. (<http://www.lulu.com/shop/charles-chiniquy/the-gift/ebook/product-21527833.html>) (<http://bit.ly/2QV28Zv>)

Indeed, these are perilous times with much at risk. The best advice was given early in the Gospel Age by the Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy:

2 Tim. 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

¹ “Nicolaitans” comes from two Greek words (*nikos* and *laos*), meaning “to conquer” and “the people,” respectively. (*The New Pilgrim Bible: KJV Student Edition* [Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003].)

Nikos is defined as “a conquest, victory, triumph, to conquer” and by implication “dominancy over the defeated.” The word *nicao* means “to dominate, intimidate, manipulate.” Additionally, the term *laos* means “the people or the laity.” (See also Frank Shallieu, *The Keys of Revelation* [Orangeburg, NY: Revelation Research Foundation, Inc., 1993], pp. 33–34.) (PDF available at www.revelation-research.org)

² The “church,” as Papacy would define the term, is the institution (including its buildings of worship) that comprises Roman Catholicism. The English word “church,” appearing in many Bible translations, conveys this incorrect and misleading thought, namely, “the institution or building(s)” where believers meet.

While nearly all of the New Testament is a word-for-word translation from Greek to English, the word “church” is not a translation but, rather, a substitution for the original Greek word *ekklesia*. This word, or its anglicized spelling “ecclesia,” was widely used and is better understood to mean “a gathering or an assembly of believers” (i.e., the “called out” ones). The following is one instance where the word is properly translated:

Acts 19:32 The **assembly** was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. (NIV)

Early church assemblies were associated only with geographic locations (Philippi, Corinth, Thessalonica, Rome, Berea, Jerusalem, etc.) versus today’s pretentious denominational names (e.g., Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church, Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Most Precious Blood Church). Thus the original Biblical definition of a “universal” church (those “whose names are written in heaven”) has been cunningly replaced by an institution of human definition (Luke 10:20).