



# **THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Final Communication Statement re: John Jay Study**

The long-awaited report *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010*, produced by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, is a welcome deepening of our understanding of the how and why of the crime and sin of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. Keep in mind that the study released today is a report *to* the bishops of the United States, *not from* them.

The report makes clear that the vast majority of these crimes of sexual abuse occurred during the 1960s through the 1980s and it concludes that the incidence of such abuse has declined sharply since 1985. It further states that there is no single cause that led to this crisis, neither the practice of celibacy nor the incidence of homosexuality in the Catholic priesthood.

Karen Terry, PhD., John Jay's principal investigator for the report says that "The increased frequency of abuse in the 1960s and 1970s was consistent with the patterns of increased deviance of society during that time." She also stated that "social influences intersected with vulnerabilities of individual priests whose preparation for a life of celibacy was inadequate at that time."

Here in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, as elsewhere in the Church, many steps have been taken to combat this evil. As the study points out, providing safe environments for our young people is perhaps the most important way to prevent sexual abuse. In the Archdiocese, we have checked the backgrounds of **15,376** adults. We also have trained **7,749** employees **14,915** volunteers, **360** temps, and

**2,699** Parent-volunteers. In addition, we train **every** child in our schools and in our religious education programs every year. In 2010, **34,182** children (all ages) were trained to be aware of and avoid possibilities of sexual abuse.

Also, our seminary formation program provides rigorous screening, and more intensive and comprehensive human and emotional development, which better prepares our future priests to live out their commitment to serving God and His Church.

The sexual abuse of minors is a tragedy that affects every family, religion, school, organization, institution, and profession in our society. The Catholic Church in the United States has been noted as the first group anywhere to contract a professional agency – in this case, the John Jay College – to examine the “causes and contexts” of this scourge.

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