



Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organizational Culture

Marie Keenan

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A meticulously researched inside look at child sexual abuse by clergy, this exhaustive, hard-hitting analysis weaves together interviews with abusive priests and church historical and administrative details to propose a new way of thinking about clerical sexual offenders. Linking the personal and the institutional, researcher and therapist Marie Keenan locates the problem of child sexual abuse not exclusively in individual pathology, but also within larger systemic factors, such as the very institution of priesthood itself, the Catholic take on sexuality, clerical culture, power relations, governance structures of the Catholic Church, the process of formation for priesthood and religious life, and the complex manner in which these factors coalesce to create serious institutional risks for boundary violations, including child sexual abuse. Keenan draws on the priests' own words not to excuse their horrific crimes, but to offer the first in-depth account of a tragic, multi-faceted phenomenon.

What emerges is a troubling portrait of a Church in crisis and a series of recommendations that call for nothing less than a new ecclesiology and a new, more critical theology. Only through radical institutional reform, Keenan argues, can a more representative and accountable Church emerge.

Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church is a unique reference for scholars of the Church and therapists who work with both victims and offenders, as well as a forward-thinking blueprint for reform.



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