Child sexual abuse by the Catholic Church in Spain

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Catholic Church in Spain
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Introduction
introduction
keeping the silence

El Vaticano ocultó durante 63 años los abusos del fundador de los Legionarios de Cristo

Por primera vez el Vaticano reconoce que sabía los abusos cometidos por Marcial Maciel pero no hizo nada
La Iglesia española silencia desde hace décadas los casos de pederastía

La cúpula eclesiástica se niega a facilitar datos de los procesos que ha conocido o instruido. Solo tres de las 70 diócesis consultadas obligan al obispo en sus protocolos a informar a Fiscalía.
introduction

relationship with the Church
chronic abuses
incredulity
silence strategy
secrete until adulthood
male victims
serious consequences

introduction

Gilbert Gauthe (1945)
introduction

JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

10,667 victims of child sexual abuse by 4,392 priests and deacons

more than 4% of active religious

only officially reported cases
META-ANALYSES


**introduction**

around 8% of males and 19.7% of females...
US and CANADA

$n=575$ male and $1,234$ female adults practising Catholics

3.3% of men and 1.7% of women victims of child sexual abuse by a priest
IRELAND
Ryan Report

between 6% and 9% of Catholic priests had committed sexual abuse against minors
introduction
prevalence

NETHERLANDS

\[ n = 34,267 \text{ subjects} \]
representative of the Dutch population aged 40 and above

2.7% of men and 0.7% of women victims of contact sexual abuse before age 18 by an employee member of the Catholic Church
GERMANY

Sexueller Missbrauch an Minderjährigen durch katholischer Priester, Diakone und männliche Ordensangehörige im Bereich der Deutschen Bishopskonferenz (2018)

Heidelberg University, Giessen University, University of Mannheim

complaints against 1,670 clergy,
or a 4.4% of the total
GERMANY

\[ n = 2,510 \text{ adults (54.3\% females, } M = 48 \text{ years)} \]

0.16% of participants reported contact sexual abuse before age 18 in institutions of the Catholic Church

around 200,000 victims
AUSTRALIA
Betrayal of Trust (2013)

7% of Catholic clergy faced credible allegations of child sexual abuse
introduction
prevalence

23,000 parishes
18,000 priests

less than 0.2% convictions

España, un desierto estadístico sobre la pederastia en la Iglesia
Child sexual victimization

6th commandment
“Thou shalt not commit impure acts”

Code of Canon Law (1983)
canon nº 1395 § 2 “A cleric who has offended in other ways against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, if this crime was committed by force, or by threats, or in public, or with a minor under the age of sixteen years, is to be punished with just penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants”

SIN, MORAL FAILURE

introduction
keeping the silence
introduction
keeping the silence

 Legionaries of Christ  
(Berry & Renner, 2004)  
MEXICO

 FSM. Karadima's Group  
(Monkeberg, 2010)  
CHILE

 Sodalicio (Sodalitium Christianae Vitae)  
(Salinas, 2015)  
PERU
introduction
keeping the silence

Joaquín Benítez Case - Maristas Brothers of the Schools (2016)

SPAIN
Una víctima revela la ocultación de abusos sexuales en Montserrat

La abadía pagó 7.200 euros en efectivo a Miguel Hurtado en el 2003 para tratar sus secuelas psicológicas. El monasterio informó al Vaticano en el 2016, que conocía el abuso, pero no trató el caso.

Dos hermanos denuncian abusos en los Jesuitas de Barcelona: "Destrozaron a toda la familia"

Las víctimas aseguran que los jesuitas recibieron en el pasado quejas de ambos profesores pero la congregación lo niega.

Fin del silencio en Constantí: mosén Pere Llagostera abusó de niños durante décadas

Jaime María Ramón, víctima del sacerdote de la localidad, explica los ataques sexuales que sufrieron los monaguillos en excursiones al Pirineo.

Joan Reig, de Els Pets, revela que la canción 'Conus' es autobiográfica y habla del abuso que también él sufrió por parte del mismo párroco.

Guillen Sánchez
Barcelona - Sábado, 19/01/2019 | Actualizado el 01/02/2019 a las 00:45 CET

Guillen Sánchez
Constantí - Domingo, 03/02/2019 | Actualizado el 04/02/2019 a las 18:30 CET

TRANSFORMA TU NEGOCIO SIN MIEDO, CON LAS SOLUCIONES DE SEGURIDAD.
El Síndic de Greuges crea una comisión para ayudar a víctimas de abusos en la Iglesia

- El organismo tendrá la función de “escuchar a las víctimas, valorar los casos, examinarlos, evaluar los daños físicos y emocionales y proponer diferentes vías de reacción”
introduction
keeping the silence

“I want them to investigate whether there have been more cases and that Brother S.V. do not continue to appear as a person valued by the school”

"My only interest is to let them know what this person did to us”

“To let them know what my classmates and I suffered”

“I want them to recognize the abuse and I want to help others who were also victims with my testimony”

“Having an interview with Father S. and asking him why he did it and how many more children he had abused. Then I want him to apologize to the victims ”

“I want to sit down and talk with those responsible for the abuse”

*n* = 31 victims of interpersonal violence

the punishment that the perpetrator receives only partially, and often transiently, satisfies the desire for revenge that the victim may have

the desires and fantasies of revenge tend to be linked more to the development of mental disorders than to an adaptive process of overcoming victimization
introduction
keeping the silence

a) full disclosure and recognition of what happened
b) recognition of the damage caused by the Church (and the abuser)
c) the responsibility of the facts by the Church
d) the prevention of future abuses to other possible victims
e) an adequate response to the perpetrators
f) compensation, either financial or not
g) efforts to help the victim restore their faith in God and in the Church.

a) Fear of confronting the problem or institutional reprisals.
b) Lack of empathy for the victims.
c) Fanaticism.
d) Complicity in previous illegal acts.
e) Professional ambition.

rotten apples theory

sexual abuse is the result of individual persons without
knowledge or support from the institution

but it is well-known that there is institutional
responsibility, since during the 80s and 90s in the US many
bishops changed priests from whom they had received
complaints of sexual abuse from parish to parish

‘Passing the trash’
(Wurtele, 2012)

introduction
keeping the silence

Opportunity structure
• Great authority, which is reflected in their power to forgive our sins.
• Socially viewed as virtuous, trustworthy, community leaders.
• Isolated, without friends, partner, family.
• Discretion and lack of formal supervision in activities carried out with children.

Structure of the organization
• Little professional mobility and few possibilities for promotion.
• Subculture of secrets, sins, celibacy.
• Male status quo, very conservative values.

introduction
keeping the silence

coping mechanism allowing individuals to forget or separate from their conscious thinking those experiences that are too painful to cope with at that moment


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>childhood</th>
<th>adolescence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dissociation</td>
<td>grieving process</td>
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personal maturation and reflection

unprosecutable
introduction
keeping the silence

(Rut, Benedetti, & Waser, 2004)

«naming, blaming, claiming» effect

hard to put a name to what happened to them (*naming*), to blame the victimizer rather than themselves (*blaming*), and to reveal their victimization and testify in court, explaining their experience in detail (*claiming*)
Consequences
consequences  
children and adolescents

- Confidence in oneself
  - low self-esteem
  - negative self-concept
  - perception of low value
  - undeserving love
  - anxiety
  - depression

- Confidence in others
  - distrust
  - interpersonal problems
  - low empathy
  - perpetration of violence
  - isolation
  - antisocial behaviour

- Confidence in the future
  - lack of hope
  - lack of faith in the future
  - despair
  - helplessness
physical health
- worse overall health
- worse quality of life
- more healthcare utilization
- physical pain without a medical reason
- chronic fatigue
- somatization
- cardiovascular disorders
- chronic pelvic pain
- alterations of the menstrual cycle
- early menopause
- premature deliveries
- early pregnancy
- early abortion

mental health
- depression disorders
- anxiety disorders (phobias, panic attacks, OCD, general anxiety)
- PTSD
- psychotic disorders (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- sleeping disorders (nightmares and terrors, somnambulism)
- eating disorders (obesity, binge eating, bulimia, anorexia nervosa)
- dissociative disorders (dissociative amnesia, identity disorders)
- suicidal ideation and behavior

spiritual health

consequences
spiritual damage

Priest → In the person of God → God is good → GUILT → God is bad → SPIRITUAL DAMAGE
consequences

spiritual damage

“Because clergy represent God, Christ, and the Church, to be violated by a member of the cloth is to feel violated by God, Christ, and the Church”

"I no longer know who God is, or who he supports or represents"

"All I know is that I no longer believe in what I believed and that affects me a lot"

"Is he really a forgiving God? If so, will I find my abuser in heaven if he repents?"

"If God is supposed to be so good, why didn't he intervene and stop what was happening? Why didn't he help me or protect me?"

"They taught me that the hands of a Catholic priest were sacred, but those same hands abused me. How do you make sense of this?"
a negative image of God as cruel, non-protective and punishing, distant and bad, causing guilt, shame, feeling of betrayal and abandonment. They feel neither loved nor accepted by God, distrusting and angry at God. Lower levels of spiritual well-being, less confidence in the clergy, a negative relationship with the existence of a higher power, and less involvement in religious practices and Church activities.

(Hall, 1995; Imbens & Jonkers, 1992; Kane, Cheston, & Greer, 1993; Pritt, 1998; Ben-Ezra et al., 2010; Hall, 2008; Rossetti, 1995; Russell, 1986)
Struggles with the divine

Intrapsychic struggles

Consequences

Spiritual damage


*n* = 101 males and females between 19 and 66 years

a greater spirituality, defined as belief and faith in God or in a higher power, less depression and greater posttraumatic growth after abuse
Justice
institutional abuse occurs when adults who work for an institution that involves children abuse those who are in their care and who they should watch over and protect.


possibility of applying restorative transitional justice
a) A legacy of abuse that mostly corresponds to the past.

b) The existence of mass victimization, sufficient to reveal patterns of abuse and systematic practices.

c) The linking of abuses to an institution that has occupied a position of spiritual power with influence in a broad sector of society.

d) The existence of largely unsatisfied demands for justice because of conditions defining a status quo that imposed insurmountable barriers on the victims and on those seeking a response from the justice system.
e) The inability of the criminal justice system to deal with current demands for justice, due to the time lapse since the occurrence of the events or the fact that perpetrators are no longer in condition to stand trial.

f) A social context, in which there has been a transition from an old order to a new one favourable to the demands of justice.

g) The need to adopt measures aimed at institutional reform and the guarantee of non-repetition.

Our study
methods

sample


n = 38 adults (25 male and 13 female) between 24 and 67 years old (M = 51,1 years; SD = 11,7).

Convenience and snowball sample

victims still feel the power of the Church and are afraid to talk

victims have received hush money from the Church
methods
sample

battery of questions
7 sections

- General personal information
- Sexual victimization by the Catholic Church
- Sexual victimization by others
- Other childhood victimization experiences
- Psychological consequences
- Spirituality
- Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996)
Some results
results

sexual victimization by the Church

age when the abuse begun and ended
sexual victimization begun at a mean age of 11.8 years old
($SD = 3.2$; minimum= 5; maximum= 17)

sexual victimization ended at a mean age of 14.3 years old
($SD = 4.6$; minimum= 7; maximum= 31)
results
sexual victimization by the Church

chronicity
34.2% one-time episode

for the rest victimization lasted on average 3.8 years
($SD = 3.9$; minimum $= 1$; maximum $= 16$)
results
sexual victimization by the Church

severity
78.9% touching and masturbation
42.1% introduction of objects or a part of the body of the abuser into the vagina, anus or mouth of the victim
10.5% introduction of a part of the body of the victim into the vagina, anus or mouth of the abuser
15.8% sexual victimization without physical contact (sexual propositions, exhibitionism, pornography exposure, sexual behaviours in front of the victim)
results
sexual victimization by the Church

sex of the offender
100% male
7.9% female
results
sexual victimization by the Church

role of the perpetrator in the Catholic Church
65.8% parish priests
28.9% consecrated (monk, abbot, friar, brother), 7.9% seculars (catechism, religion teacher, social solidarity), 2.6% deacon, cardinal, prefect
results
sexual victimization by the Church

Catholic symbols and faith
5.3% the offender used some symbol, object or religious image - wear soutane, carry a crucifix, hold a religious icon, light a candle-

34.2% the offender used the catholic faith of the victim

“God is love and this is good”
“The holy Spirit flows through me”
“God will kill your father if you talk, if you don’t obey me”
“This is what God wants for you”
results

sexual victimization by the Church

disclosure
86.8% disclose the abuse at a mean age of 24.1 years old $(SD = 11.8; \text{minimum}= 10; \text{maximum}= 55)$

to their mother (36.4%; $n = 12$), to a friend (36.4%; $n = 12$), to another family member (24.2%; $n = 8$), to their partner (24.2%; $n = 8$), to their father (18.0%; $n = 6$), but also to a member of the Church (18.0%; $n = 6$) or to a professional (15.2%; $n = 5$)
results
sexual victimization by the Church

report to the authorities
44.7% reported the abuse

94.1% ($n = 16$) reported to a member of the Catholic church, 23.5% ($n = 4$) to a member of the security forces and 118% ($n = 2$) to the justice department

52.9% affirm that reporting had a negative effect on their wellbeing
results
sexual victimization by the Church

other victimization experiences
71.4% previous sexual abuse
53.8% previous physical abuse
50.0% previous emotional abuse
77.7% previous neglect

poly-victims probably chosen specifically
Conclusions
conclusions
what the church must do?

1- Recognize and accept what has happened. Sexual abuse against minors is a frequent reality, also in the Catholic Church.

2- Offer treatment to abusers. They should be treated with evidence-based intervention programs that are used for other abusers and have proven their effectiveness.

3- Offer treatment to victims. Victims and their families must receive psychological treatment and be respected and understood by the Church.
conclusions
what the church must do?

4- Share information. The Church should facilitate studies and research on this subject, by making all relevant information available.

5- Develop protocols for prevention and intervention. How to avoid new abuses, and what to do when a case is discovered, must be regulated and formalized in specific protocols.

6- Train and support priests and other members of the Church. Regarding the limits that must be maintained with people in their charge or with whom they come into contact, doubts related to sexuality and celibacy, etc.
conclusions
what the church must do?
conclusions
what the church must do?
THANK YOU

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