**Module B – Church and Seminary Responses to Sexual Abuse of Minors by**

**Catholic Priests in the United States**

**Outline, Goals and Comments, Discussion Questions, References and Sources**

**Outline**

1. Church Directives on Formation for Celibacy (B-4 to B-7)
2. Phases of Response to Clerical Sexual Abuse by the Church and by Seminaries (B-8 to B-12)
3. Details of Responses by the Bishops’ Conference (B-13 to B-17)
4. Promulgation of the “Five Principles” (B-13)
5. Development of *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (B-14)
6. Creation of the “Office for Children and Youth Protection” (B-15)
7. Establishment of the National Review Board and Diocesan/ Eparchical Review Boards

 (B-16 to B-17)

1. Summary and Discussion Questions (B-18 to B-19)

**Goals and Comments**

The goal of Module B is to examine the multiple responses of the Church, especially the USCCB and U.S. seminaries, to Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States. It first identifies some important church documents that guide seminary formation, including *Pastores dabo vobis* by Pope John Paul II and various editions of *The Program of Priestly Formation*. It then outlines four phases of response, paralleling church directives with formation programs as developed in seminaries from the 1940s to the present. After the 2002 revelations of extensive clergy sexual abuse, the bishops’ conference responded forcefully to the situation by promulgating the “The Five Principles,” developing *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,* which created the Office for Children and Youth Protection. They also established National and Diocesan Review Boards.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What other actions have been taken in your institution to prevent clerical sexual abuse?
2. What other preventative measures are needed in the future?
3. How well informed about prevention of abuse are the administrators, faculty, and students of your institution?
4. What more needs to be done to ensure continued progress in understanding and acting on the problem of clerical sexual abuse?

**Titles of Slides and References**

B-1: Module B

B-2: Title Slide

B-3: Main Sources of Data

B-4: Church Directives on Formation for Celibacy and Sexuality, 1

B-5: Church Directives on Formation for Celibacy and Sexuality, 2

B-6: Church and Seminary Responses

B-7: Involvement of Seminaries

B-8: Phases of Reports and Responses

B-9: Phase 1 – 1940s to Mid-1970s

 Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 45

Church Response: Clergy sexual misconduct was not recognized as a widespread problem. Few cases had been brought forward and if so they were seldom publically known. Thus the Church’s response was virtually non-existent in its documents pertaining to seminary formation before the 1980s. In 1971 the first edition of the *PPF* was published with only limited reference to celibacy, sexuality, and love. The focus was on the importance of celibacy for the sake of the pastoral mission.

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| **PPF First Edition (1971)** |
| * Four relatively brief paragraphs on celibacy were subsumed under the broad category of “Pastoral Ministry”
* The focus was on effective ministry rather than on the person who would be embracing the discipline
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B-10: Phase 2 – Mid-1970s to 1985

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|  ***PPF* Second Edition (1976)** | ***PPF* Third Edition (1981)** |
| * Repeated the content of the first, but added one new paragraph, underlining the personal value of celibacy as a way of sharing in the life of Christ
* *Missing from these documents* was an appreciation of the limited understanding that some seminarians had about the meaning of celibacy and the seriousness and importance of living a moral life
 | Kept most of the earlier material and was augmented by:* an explanation of the value of celibacy in a consumer culture
* the importance of understanding the nature of sexuality, including homosexuality
* the shift in tone revolved largely around reinforcing the obligatory nature of celibacy
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B-11: Phase 3 – 1985 to 2002

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|  ***PPF* Fourth Edition (1992)** | ***PPF* Fourth Edition (1992) cont.** |
| Influenced by two major factors:* Pope John Paul II’s issuance of *Pastores dabo vobis*, which called for an overhaul of formation for priests
* ongoing revelations of sexual abuse among priests

Response represented a sea-change in that the 4th edition was more specific and directive about celibacy and sexuality* Described the negative influences of the present social climate on lifelong commitment to celibacy
* Emphasized spiritual goals, behavioral expectations, and admissions standards.
 | * Acknowledged psychological assessment as integral to the admissions process

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| **Critique of 1992 *PPF* Edition** |
| * though more thorough a rendition, it was oriented more toward spiritual practices and evaluation of appropriate external

behavior for a celibate lifestyle* it lacked discussion of sexual abuse and the extraordinary vigilance seminaries would need to exercise to deal with problems that were evident and growing
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B-12: Phase 4 – After 2002 Revelations

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| ***PPF* Fifth Edition (2005)** | **Directives Issued in 2005 for the First Time** |
| After the bulk of revelations about sexual abuse among priests a new lengthy section on “Human Formation” was included:* changed substantially the structure and content
* outlined a multifaceted program of instruction
* provided a detailed explanation of basic attitudes and behavioral expectations about celibacy
 | * the disqualification for admission if any criminal sexual activity with a minor or inclination toward such was known
* the expectation that all guidelines of the Holy See would be followed regarding same-sex experience and/or inclinations
* the requirement to investigate certain conditions prior to orders, such as whether or not the candidate has been sexually abused and whether any remedies would be needed
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B-13: Details of Responses by the Bishops’ Conference, 1

 Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 82

In the mid-1980s when accusations of sexual abuse of minors by priests surfaced, the bishops initiated discussion of the issue at the annual meetings of the NCCB (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, now USCCB). Through the years following, several major statements and documents were issued by the bishops.

In 1984 and 1985, disclosure about the Gauthe case, combined with information from dioceses about incidents of sexual abuse of youth by priests, prompted the NCCB to address as a body the issue of sexual abuse. The issue would be revisited annually for almost ten years. During those years, the NCCB began training programs for vicars, encouraged the development of policies, and distributed strategies for responding to litigation. Overall, prompt psychological treatment for the priest became the primary intervention.

In 1988 the General Counsel of the NCCB made a public statement defined as “affirmative activities,” which were codified into five formal principles in 1992.

On November 19, 1992, the bishops (National Conference of Catholic Bishops [NCCB] and the United States Catholic Conference [USCC]) adopted the Five Principles to guide the response of a diocese to a report of sexual abuse by a priest.

B-14: Details of Responses by the Bishops’ Conference, 2

 Notes:

The “Charter” was published with a lead title Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal. The booklet is divided into three parts, each of which is subdivided:

1. Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

a. To Promote Healing and Reconciliation with Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse of Minors (Articles 1, 2, 3)

b. To Guarantee an Effective Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors (Articles 4, 5, 6, 7)

c. To Ensure the Accountability of Our Procedures (Articles 8, 9, 10, 11)

d. To Protect the Faithful in the Future (Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

e. Conclusion including four “Pledges”

2. Essential Norms for diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons

a. Decree of Promulgation

b. Preamble

c. Norms – 13 in number, followed by Notes

3. A Statement of Episcopal Commitment [Appendix A]

a. Introduction

b. Four affirmations of commitment

B-15: Details of Responses by the Bishops’ Conference, 3

 Notes: 2010 Annual Report - Appendix

Each year since 2004, the Secretariat/Office of Child and Youth Protection has prepared an “Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter” for the National Review Board and the USCCB. The findings and recommendations are based on the information provided by the dioceses and eparchies. CARA staff members gather and analyze data from Dioceses, Eparchies, and Religious Institutes of priests. [2010 Annual Report]

Diocesan Priests: In 2010, 428 new credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor were reported against a priest or deacon. [Appendix B]

Religious Priests: In 2010, 77 new credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor were reported against a priest. [Appendix C]

NEW CREDIBLE ALLEGATIONS IN 2010

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| Years when abuse was alleged to have begun | Diocesan | Religious |
| Before 1975 | 224 | 39 |
| 1975 – 1999  | 156 | 34 |
| 2000 – 2010 | 17 | 0 |
| Unknown | 28 (428) 425 | 2 (77) 75 |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Decades of abuse | Diocesan | Religious |
| Before 1960 | 51 | 11 |
| 1960s | 109 | 17 |
| 1970s | 120 | 25 |
| 1980s | 85 | 17 |
| 1990s | 15 | 3 |
| 2000 – 2009 | 10 | 0 |
| 2010 | 7 | 0 |
| Unknown time | 28 | 2 |

B-16: Details of Responses by the Bishops’ Conference, 4

B-17: Details of Responses by the Bishops’ Conference, 5

B-18: Summary of Responses to Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United

 States

**Sources**

This module and others prepared for use in seminaries and schools of theology are based primarily on the two reports presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team, The City University of New York: *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States*, 1950-2010, March, 2011 and *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002*, February 2004.

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