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## Predator priests

By Joyce Howard Price  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Unlike other Catholic priests convicted of sexual abuse, John J. Geoghan, Boston's defrocked priest linked to 136 molestations, targeted both pre-pubescent and sexually mature teen-age boys.

"He knew no bounds. His victims ranged in age from 6 to 15," said Boston lawyer Mitchell Garabedian, attorney for many of Geoghan's victims.

In the majority of similar cases, convicted priests were not pedophiles pursuing pre-pubescent children, but men seeking illegal sexual relations with physically developed teen-age boys, contend researchers of sexual-abuse cases involving priests.

Father Donald B. Cozzens, author of "The Changing Face of the Priesthood," speculates that the "disproportionate number of gay men that populate our seminaries" is the root of such sexual abuse.

He says 90 percent of reported abuse cases are from teen-age boys, and Catholic Church leaders have not addressed the problem because they fear it will reveal that the "percentage of homosexual priests and seminarians is significantly higher than in the population at large."

"I think we have to ask the question: Why are 90 to 95 — and some estimates say as high as 98 — percent of the victims of clergy acting out against teen-agers, boys? Why isn't there a higher percentage of teen-age girls?" Father Cozzens recently said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

But Dr. Fred Berlin, founder of the National Institute for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Trauma at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, contends that regardless of any trend or pattern in priests' sexual orientation, there is no evidence that homosexual men — priests included — are any more likely to seek out adolescent boys for sex than heterosexual men are to go after teen-age girls.

Dr. Berlin said any adult male who repeatedly seeks sexual relations with adolescent minors has a sexual disorder known as "ephebophilia."

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"This doesn't mean they are homosexual. They could be homosexual ephebophiles or homosexual pedophiles," depending on the age of the youngsters, Dr. Berlin said.

Ephebophilia is not specifically defined or even mentioned in the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," according to APA spokesman John Blamphin.

But both he and Dr. Berlin say it would be included under the heading for "paraphilias not otherwise specified."

Some doctors who specialize in sex abuse do not believe homosexuality can be linked to either pedophilia — the sexual abuse of children under the age of puberty (generally 13) — or ephebophilia.

"I can certainly imagine it's a factor in some individual instances, but we don't have research to show it's a primary factor," Dr. David Fassler, a child psychiatrist in Burlington, Vt., said in a telephone interview.

A more important factor may be that many priests who abuse youths were themselves sexually abused. Some doctors even point out that many young men who become priests suffer from stunted sexual development and may seek out sexual partners in their own emotional age range.

Richard Sipe, a psychiatrist and former priest who has researched the issue, says homosexual men comprise at least 30 percent of the priesthood. He said he has seen some internal studies by "church officials" that put the figure at between 40 percent and 50 percent.

Father C. John McCloskey, director of the Catholic Information Center in Washington, believes no more than 2 percent to 4 percent of priests are homosexuals.

Disclosures of sexual abuse of children and teens by priests have become a national crisis for the Catholic Church. Accusations of such abuse against priests, former priests, or even higher-ranking church officials have occurred not only in Boston, but also in St. Louis and other parts of Missouri; Bridgeport, Conn.; Palm Beach, Fla; San Francisco; Detroit; Wilmington, Del.; New York; Los Angeles; New Hampshire; and Maine.

A Florida bishop resigned in the wake of such accusations, and pressure is mounting for Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law to step down because of concerns that he did little to stop known abusers in his diocese. Dozens of other priests have either resigned or been suspended.

Pope John Paul II did address the church's mushrooming sex scandal in a 22-page annual pre-Easter letter to clergy. Without using the term "sex abuse," the pope said guilty priests have succumbed to the "most grievous forms" of evil and "brought scandal" to the church. He offered no suggestions for addressing the problem.

Yesterday, the pope summoned America's 13 cardinals to Rome for a meeting next week that Vatican officials said will focus on the sex-abuse scandal in the American church.

One child psychiatrist in the District, who did not wish to be identified, criticized the American Psychiatric Association for "prostituting themselves and getting politically correct."

He said the APA has downplayed the role of homosexuals in both pedophilia and in ephebophilia.

The local psychiatrist hailed the editors of the Washington Blade for printing a front-page story last week that examines this issue. "It's a lie" to disassociate homosexuality from sexual abuse of male minors,

the doctor said in an interview.

The Blade article points out that "some aspects of gay male culture do place a high value on youth, complete with terms like 'chicken' and 'twink' to describe desirable young men."

But Jim Fitzgerald, a homosexual psychologist in Marietta, Ga., insists in the article that homosexuals do not put any more emphasis on youth than heterosexuals. He acknowledged that the term "chicken" can refer to "older teens," but said it can also mean young men "in their early 20s."

Sean Cahill, director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, told the Blade: "It's obvious when you have a man and a teen-age boy that there is a same-sex element." But he hastened to add that doesn't mean all homosexual men are molesting minors.

Geoghan is currently serving a four- to five-year prison term for molesting a 10-year-old boy and has 18 more cases pending against him, Mr. Garabedian said.

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