

Chapter 4: Sexual Scandals in the Catholic Church: The Urgency of Building a New Formative Culture

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Sexual scandals in the Church have changed some of the behaviors of some clergy, religious, seminarians, and church authorities. There are others who may have become more aware of the requirements of their vocation in the area of sexuality and act in accord with this awareness. There may be others still who have changed their way of interacting with others because of fear of unwanted consequences, like punishment, suspension, scandal, imprisonment, or fear of community control, when a community becomes aware of its role and its responsibility to protect the young and vulnerable adults.

However, it is premature to say that these changes are a result of greater maturity in individuals or that they are the result of substantial shifts in the formative process. There has not been enough time for any changes to have had a significant impact. A substantial change requires conversion of mentality and the building of a new culture. Without a strong communal effort to build a new formative culture, the needed changes run the risk of being only cosmetic. They will show that the ecclesial community is sensitive to the issue of sexual abuse, but they will not create a real cultural change.¹ Although being more and more rigid and clear about the “rules” and stressing Magisterial orientations may strengthen external conformity, these approaches will not be effective in the long run, especially from a preventive perspective, if there is no true conversion.

¹ See the important works of Amedeo Cencini, *È cambiato qualcosa? La Chiesa dopo gli scandali sessuali* (Bologna: EDB, 2015); Daniel Portillo Trevizo, ed., *Teología y prevención. Estudio sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia* (Maliño, Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2020); Daniel Portillo Trevizo, ed., *Formación y prevención. La prevención de los abusos sexuales en los procesos formativos de la Iglesia* (Boadilla del Monte, Madrid: PPC, 2019).

My interest in this essay, rather than taking into consideration the sexual scandals in themselves, is to turn my attention to the formative process of clergy and religious. I address ten elements of the formation process that cannot continue to be ignored if we, as Church, really want to effectively face the wounds in the Church caused by the sexual abuse of the vulnerable by some clergy. Without systemic change in our formation to healthy sexuality in the seminaries, the wounds caused by representatives of the church will deepen and the hurt continue.²

Some Essential Elements to Consider³

The sexual scandals in the Church unveiled the necessity of considering the initial and ongoing process of clergy and religious formation in what one needs to do to integrate one's sexuality in a project of life.⁴ At the same time that such an important issue cannot be ignored, misconceptions about it have led the Church all over the world to face serious negative

² See, for example, Marco Marzano, *La casta dei casti. I preti, il sesso, l'amore* (Milano: Bompiani, 2021).

³ See the work of Alfredo César da Veiga and Ronaldo Zacharias, ed., *Igreja e escândalos sexuais. Por uma nova cultura formativa* (São Paulo: Paulus, 2019). Special attention should be given to the chapter "Equívocos no processo formativo" (209–252), which forms the basis of the proposals given here. This work is intended to assist those who have responsibility for vocation discernment and the formative process within the Church. Although the presbyterate and religious communities have this responsibility, those who work more directly with young people in formation need to go beyond establishing a merely preventive culture and initiate a new formative culture. Concretely, this will require integrating sexuality and chastity, celibacy and quality of relationships, eros and agape and, especially, formation of the heart for ministerial life into the curriculum of the formation communities.

⁴ See, for example, Irma Patricia Espinosa Hernández, "La integración de la afectividad y de la sexualidad en la formación vocacional para la prevención del abuso sexual," in *Formación y prevención. La prevención de los abusos sexuales en los procesos formativos de la Iglesia*, ed. Daniel Portillo Trevizo (Boadilla del Monte, Madrid: PPC, 2019), 135–149; Jose Parappully and Jose Kuttianimattathil, ed., *Psychosexual Integration & Celibate Maturity: Handbook for Religious and Priestly Formation* (Bangalore: Salesian Psychological Association/South Asian Formation Commission of the Salesians, 2012); Paolo Gambini, Mario O. Llanos and Giuseppe M. Roggia, *Formazione affettivo-sessuale. Itinerario per seminaristi e giovani consacrati e consacrate* (Bologna: EDB, 2017).

consequences. Because of this, such issues, if properly taken into consideration, could pave the way for promoting a new culture of preventing and dealing with sexual scandals in the Church, a new formative culture. I note the following ten essential elements of this work.

First, clergy and religious cannot ignore that they are sexual people. Sexuality is a constitutive dimension of human personhood, which includes clergy and religious.⁵ It characterizes people's whole way of being, the way of manifesting and communicating themselves to others. Sexuality also characterizes people's way of feeling, expressing, and embodying their human love.⁶ It is the true way of being from one's personality.⁷ Being a "fundamental component of personality,"⁸ we cannot ignore sexuality in the formative process. Clergy and religious exist "in flesh" as men and women. They are persons who are deeply marked by their own sexuality. They express who they are and establish relationships with others from their sexual reality, as men and women. There is no other way of existing and fulfilling themselves as persons but as sexual persons. Therefore, in embracing priestly celibacy or a vow of chastity as a path for personal realization, clergy and religious must understand that this choice does not mean the denial of their own sexuality or reducing it to something accidental or secondary in their life. On the contrary, they must embrace and receive their sexuality as a gift they possess as well as one that they give as a gift for others. Because human sexuality is "the place" from which they relate to others, to the world and to God, it is "called" to inspire them to

⁵ Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, *The Sexual Person: Toward a Renewed Catholic Anthropology* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2008).

⁶ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education*, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19831101_sexual-education_en.html.

⁷ Giuseppe Mariano Roggia, "Cammino spirituale e maturazione affettivo-sessuale," in *Formazione affettivo-sessuale. Itinerario per seminaristi e giovani consacrati e consacrate*, ed. P. Gambini and M.O. Llanos and G.M. Roggia (Bologna: EDB, 2017), 107. All translations are those of the author.

⁸ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education*.

go beyond themselves to be open to their surrounding reality. In this process, they find everything as a possibility for a meaningful relationship. Sexuality is both a high gift and a high form of fragility in the life of human beings. If clergy and religious do not know how to integrate their sexuality into a project of life that provides meaning, that same sexuality can become a “place” of dehumanized experiences of the self and with the other.⁹ Instead of being a language of love, fidelity, reciprocity, openness, and self-donation, sexuality can signify unlove, infidelity, abuse, possessiveness, exploitation, and violence. This can happen regardless of our personal choice for priestly celibacy or consecrated life.

Second, clergy and religious cannot ignore that sexual orientation is part of a person’s identity. Clergy and religious are men and women who love people as hetero and homosexuals. Regarding sexual desire, they do not choose to whom they feel attracted. They all discover their own attraction within a process of sexual development and maturing. When attraction is constitutive, that is, exclusive or predominant,¹⁰ it is also part of their identity. Therefore, this attraction must be accepted if it is to be integrated into a personal existence. Sexual orientation is characterized as a concrete way that they embody love. Because of this, it can be defined as an anthropological condition,¹¹ a way of being and loving, whether or not it entails a sexual relationship with someone. While sexual orientation, when constitutive, does not depend on personal choice, the way to satisfy this desire is part of one’s freedom. Thus, the person is the one responsible

⁹ See, for example, Dysmas de Lassus, *Schiacciare l'anima. Gli abusi spirituali nella vita religiosa* (Bologna: EDB, 2021).

¹⁰ It is important to keep in mind that there are sexual attractions—both heterosexual and homosexual—that are best characterized as being momentary, occasional, peripheral. Such attractions are not part of a person’s identity; rather, they are dependent upon stages of development, the contexts in which one lives, the experiences one has had and several other factors. Since they are not constitutive of one’s identity, they are conditioned more by lived experiences than by a certain way of being. See Ronaldo Zacharias, “Orientação afetivo-sexual. Para além da cultura do ‘não pergunte, não diga’,” in *Formação: desafios morais*, ed. J.A. Trasferetti, M.I.C. Millen, and R. Zacharias (São Paulo: Paulus, 2018), 201–233.

¹¹ Marciano Vidal, *Ética da sexualidade* (São Paulo: Loyola, 2017), 119.

for his/her decisions. Clergy and religious cannot forget that they choose priestly celibacy or consecrated life as persons who, with regard to desire, are hetero or homosexuals. This awareness means recognizing that the process of integration of sexuality is always dependent on self-acceptance of their own identity and the satisfaction of their own desire. Priestly celibacy and a vow of chastity do not annul any desire but require that such a desire be integrated, whether hetero or homosexual, into a personal project of life.¹²

Third, clergy and religious cannot ignore the risk of identifying continence and chastity as the same thing. While continence means abstinence from sex for an experience of pleasure, chastity is “the successful integration of sexuality within the person” (*Catechism*, no. 2337). In other words, chastity means the integration of sexuality in one’s own project of life. Certainly, a person can be abstinent without being chaste, that is he/she can abstain from sex without integrating his/her own sexuality. Clergy and religious must also have in mind that, although sexual abstinence limits and disciplines a determined expression of sexual desire—that is, an expression through genital intimacy—this abstinence is unable to limit or discipline all expressions of this desire.¹³ Hence, it is a huge and tragic mistake to believe that sexual abstinence leads to the control of sexual desire. The tension between the satisfaction of the desire and social regulations are part of the human condition. When sexual abstinence is not a personal commitment, but an external imposition, desire does not find a

¹² Zacharias, “Orientação afetivo-sexual. Para além da cultura do ‘não pergunte, não diga,’” 213.

¹³ It is worth considering the indicators of the sexual integration process as described by Milena Stevani, “Il processo di maturazione a livello affettivo e sessuale,” in *Formazione affettivo-sessuale. Itinerario per seminaristi e giovani consacrati e consacrate*, ed. P. Gambini and M.O. Llanos and G.M. Roggia (Bologna: EDB, 2017), 45–76, and the affective maturity indicators described by Paolo Gambini and Carla de Nitto, “Affettività, sessualità e vita di relazione,” in *Formazione affettivo-sessuale. Itinerario per seminaristi e giovani consacrati e consacrate*, 77–101.

satisfactory resolution, and dealing with so powerful an energy is not a matter that depends solely on the will of the person.¹⁴

Fourth, clergy and religious cannot ignore that priestly celibacy and consecrated life are not options for those who simply “want” them. This is because we are dealing with choices—choosing celibacy or living the vow of chastity—that require a certain objective condition to animate the relevant choice. Therefore, these options are for those who “can,” in the sense of renouncing to have a life partner, renouncing sex for pleasure, and renouncing the possibility of being a biological parent.¹⁵ These options are not understood only by reason or will. They originated in a divine call to which the answer demands an honest recognition of this call and, with it, a gift that enables these called individuals to provide a positive response. Clergy and religious must understand that such options are not easily sublimated. The process of sublimation, characterized by the capacity of re-orienting and re-meaning the desire,¹⁶ does not only depend on the will but also on the “capacity” to do so.¹⁷ In this sense, the formative process

¹⁴ See the important works of Ana Cristina Canosa, “Realização sexual. Para além da perversão e da tolice,” in *Formação. Desafios morais 2*, ed. J.A. Trasferetti, M.I.C. Millen and R. Zacharias (São Paulo: Paulus, 2020), 301–315; Luiz Augusto de Mattos, “Da duplicidade à integração da sexualidade. Formar para relacionamentos de qualidade,” in *Formação: desafios morais*, ed. J.A. Trasferetti, M.I.C. Millen, and R. Zacharias (São Paulo: Paulus, 2018), 151–171.

¹⁵ William C. Castilho Pereira, “Por uma compreensão da pessoa e da vivência do celibato,” in *O dom do celibato na vida e na missão da Igreja*, ed. Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (Brasília: Edições CNBB, 2012), 129.

¹⁶ As Juan María Uriarte reminds us, “sublimation is not the transformation of genital impulses into another reality. There is no alchemy process that transforms genital impulses into socially acceptable or valid behaviors.” Sublimation is best understood as “a psychic process through which this precious potential [the sexual impulse] separates itself from its genital pole and is oriented towards other non-genital objects and ends, which are socially positive and precious. ... More than a transformation process, it is a transference process.” Juan María Uriarte, *O celibato. Apontamentos antropológicos, espirituais e pedagógicos* (Prior Velho: Paulinas, 2018), 55–56.

¹⁷ Pereira, “Por uma compreensão da pessoa e da vivência do celibato,” 134, 137. The following article also merits consideration: Mario O. Llanos and Stefano Tognacci, “Elementi antropologici dell’affettività e sessualità,” in *Formazione affettivo-sessuale. Itinerario per*

should help clergy and religious choose what is more meaningful for each of them, focusing much less on what must be renounced. The love of a celibate person “will always be the love of a poor and weak person, in which its expression is limited by his previous commitment.”¹⁸ In other words, the formative process must be a way to educate to love as a “poor” person, that is, recognizing that it is not possible to give to the other what was definitively given to God and accepting the sacrifice of privation from some sexual expressions of love.

Fifth, clergy and religious cannot ignore the need to recognize their own desire is an “essential condition for a responsible ministerial leadership.”¹⁹ This recognition presupposes sensitivity towards their own feelings, needs, and desires, which must be realized, accepted, and interpreted in order to be integrated. A formative proposal that does not contemplate this reality will be a fragile proposal, exposing both candidates to the priesthood or to religious life and those who will be part of their journey to great risk. There is no standardized formation, a “one size fits all” formation in matters of emotions and chastity. It would be a great mistake if clergy and religious believe that, by simply knowing the orientations from the Magisterium, they would be able to know what to do and how to deal with their own desires and fantasies. Unfortunately, some clergy and religious easily tend to idealize and spiritualize this issue, and, in so doing, find themselves with no reference point to make the more appropriate choices according to their project of life. Consequently, they will generate a negative sense of loneliness and, without realizing it, may start creating a series of

seminaristi e giovani consacrati e consacrate, ed. P. Gambini and M.O. Llanos and G.M. Roggia (Bologna: EDB, 2017), 19–28.

¹⁸ Eduardo López Azpitarte, *Ética da sexualidade e do matrimônio* (São Paulo: Paulus, 1997), 427.

¹⁹ Cristina L.H. Traina, “Erotic Attunement: Rethinking Love Across Pastoral Power Gradients,” in *Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach*, ed. P.B. Jung and D.W. Stephens (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 44.

circumstances that lead to the origin of behaviors that are part of the crises we are now facing as Church.²⁰

Sixth, clergy and religious cannot ignore the fact that it is not possible to separate the way of living their sexuality from their personal maturity. Sexual maturity is part of human maturity. This maturity is related to the fundamental consistency between who a person is and what they profess to be as a result of the integration between autonomous identity and mutual interdependency. Thus, their maturity becomes externally evident in their capacity to be faithful to the commitments and duties that they have freely taken on. As part of human maturity, sexual maturity is more than a state to be achieved. Rather, it should be understood as a process to be embodied. It is never healthy when obsessively pursued.²¹ This process must express the integration of clergy and religious sexuality into a project of life and the meaning that sexuality has within each person's own personality. This will lead to a coherent relationship between being and living, generating openness of the self which then becomes a gift they give to the other. This demands concrete attitudes to prevent a certain lifestyle that favors narcissistic attraction and self-absorption, or, in other words, self-referentiality.²² Clergy and religious need to educate themselves and

²⁰ Ronaldo Zacharias, "De uma crise sem precedentes aos precedentes de muitas crises. A urgência de uma nova compreensão da sexualidade," in *Francisco. Renasce a esperança*, ed. J.D. Passos and A.M.L. Soares (São Paulo: Paulinas, 2013), 62.

²¹ See López Azpitarte, *Ética da sexualidade e do matrimônio* (Brasil: Paulus Editora, 1997), 421–423; *Catechism*, no. 2342. Francisco J. Insa Gómez provides a helpful description of the obsessive-perfectionist personality and proposes a set of guidelines for formators. Francisco Javier Insa Gómez, "Dependência afetiva e perfeccionismo: uma proposta a partir da teoria do apego," in *Amar e ensinar a amar. A formação da afetividade nos candidatos ao sacerdócio*, ed. F.J. Insa Gómez (São Paulo: Cultor de Livros, 2019), 101–122.

²² According to Pope Francis, being an authentic missionary disciple means assuming discipleship as a constant imperative calling-replying in one's life. It is the most effective way to avoid self-absorption and to see oneself as a self-transcending subject, a subject compelled towards encounter with others, towards the existential, social and geographical peripheries of life. See Pope Francis, "Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the General Coordination Meeting," www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-celam-rio.html.

others in a way of being that helps them relate to others with openness, sharing, dialogue, respect, forgiveness, and reciprocity: “Sexuality and the way of embodying it are a thermometer of a person’s maturity.”²³

Seventh, clergy and religious cannot ignore the fact that not all cases of sexual abuse result from pathologies that were not previously identified. Although previous identification of a pathology during the formation process can happen, they need to understand that many instances of abuse “are a final consequence of a series of sexual and affective compensations [...] of a celibate life that became mediocre: the border between mediocrity and perversion is less clear than we want to believe.”²⁴ In addition, they need to be aware that self-eroticism cannot be reduced to a physical issue, that is, the manipulation of genitals for pleasure. Little by little, clergy and religious can get used to an egocentric and narcissist lifestyle in which they focus only on themselves to the exclusion of others. Instead of a lifestyle that opens new windows, they surround themselves with mirrors that reflect only what they want to see.²⁵ A behavior can be self-erotic even when someone does not touch his/her genitals. “A person might think of his life from a self-erotic lens, that is, from what offers immediate pleasure and gratification, what makes her feel good. Consequently, the horizon and aspirations of a person are reduced to this gratification, without including the ‘other’ as the other at the center of his own life.”²⁶ It is not

²³ Cencini, *È cambiato qualcosa?*, 111. See also José Maria Recondo, *Imparare ad amare da pastori. Eros e ágape nella vita del prete* (Bologna, EDB, 2017), 29.

²⁴ Cencini, *È cambiato qualcosa?*, 24. Although I will refer to the institutional behavior that pathologizes pastoral action, it is worth considering the excellent reflection proposed by Daniel Portillo Trevizo, “Iglesia y prevención. Hacia una teología de la prevención,” in *Teología y prevención. Estudio sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia*, ed. Daniel Portillo Trevizo (Maliaño, Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2020), 9–35.

²⁵ Recondo, *Imparare ad amare da pastori*, 50.

²⁶ Recondo, *Imparare ad amare da pastori*, 28. Recondo offers an excellent approach to understanding some forms—intellectual, spiritual, liturgical and pastoral—in which autoeroticism manifests itself in priestly and consecrated life. See also Amedeo Cencini, *Quando a carne é fraca. O discernimento vocacional diante da imaturidade e das patologias do desenvolvimento afetivo-sexual* (São Paulo: Paulinas, 2007); Eliana Massih, “Transtornos psicoafetivos na vivência da sexualidade. Uma interlocução com a formação para a vida

difficult to understand that when someone lives in a self-erotic way, the door to abusing others is easily opened.

Eighth, clergy and religious cannot ignore that a vocation is constantly given. The choice for a priestly or consecrated life should be understood as a personal choice “for being,”²⁷ an option for transcending themselves and abandoning their egoistic attitude to open their lives to God, to reality, and to others through love. God’s call and challenges for all of us occur in an ongoing dialogical perspective, in which we all can affirm that “vocation is constantly given.”²⁸ In other words, “as a life option, vocation [...] supposes an experience of exodus of the self: departure from a ‘self-centered-I’ to receive an ‘I-called’ by God.”²⁹ This means that God’s fidelity both precedes and sustains an individual’s response to the divine calling. Only the perception and conviction of this reality can lead clergy and religious to a proper consciousness of the moral challenges of their vocation. As a result, this consciousness generates the care that they need for having their own identity defined or redefined from an “I” constantly called by the will of the Father, constantly identified by the person of the Son, and constantly moved by an action-force coming from the Spirit. Accordingly, this perspective implies that the formative process acknowledges that clergy and religious must understand their vocation as an ongoing *challenge*. One of the fundamental criteria for their discernment is not simply focusing on whether they *do or do not have* a vocation but rather that they are able *to live as a called person*.

Ninth, clergy and religious cannot ignore that a choice for priestly celibacy or for consecrated life fundamentally presupposes a desire for a meaningful relationship with God and others. This choice cannot be made

religiosa consagrada e sacerdotal,” in *Formação: desafios morais*, ed. J.A. Trasferetti and M.I.C. Millen and R. Zacharias (São Paulo: Paulus, 2018), 235–258.

²⁷ Judith A. Merkle, *O compromisso da escolha. A vida religiosa nos dias atuais* (São Paulo: Loyola, 2007), 46.

²⁸ Merkle, *O compromisso da escolha*, 48.

²⁹ Carlos Palácio, “Luzes e sombras da vida religiosa consagrada nos dias de hoje,” *Convergência* 444 (2011): 433.

simply after a consideration between the pros and cons of the choice. As this choice is a vocational answer to an eminently ministerial call, this choice is only able to sustain and strengthen authentic vocational motivations if it is grounded in a loving relationship with God and embodied as the expression of this relationship. In other words, the experience of a loving relationship with God as the one who calls challenges clergy and religious to embody this call in a meaningful relationship with others.³⁰ Ultimately, God calls them to serve those in need. The sexual scandals are telling us that we are all, with no exceptions, vessels of clay, and, because of this, we cannot follow Jesus without a radical conversion of mind and heart. The fact of publicly professing a specific lifestyle does not free someone from being inconsistent and hypocritical, especially if he/she knew that he/she could not live according to this lifestyle, or did not want to be faithful to the values professed. Because we all are vessels made of clay, our treasure is permanently at risk. It means that we all need to make a decision of caring for the treasure and for the vessels. The best way of caring for both is to remain united to the true vine in order to produce good fruit (John 15: 5). Hence, we can affirm that “a disciple is not unfaithful when and because he/she does something wrong, but when he/she does not produce [good] fruits: it is the infertility that reveals the infidelity.”³¹

Tenth, clergy and religious cannot ignore that, at the same time they are the result of some ecclesiopathologies, they also generate and sustain them when they assume elitist mentalities or structural clericalism. In this context, “ecclesiopathologies” mean “all anomalous dynamics that, within the ecclesial ambiance, foster a culture of abuse and trigger possible inappropriate sexual behavior.”³² The term makes clear the institutional

³⁰ See the important work of Luis Manuel Ali Herrera, “El ecosistema del celibato sacerdotal,” in *Teología y prevención. Estudio sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia*, ed. Daniel Portillo Trevizo (Maliaño, Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2020), 173–203.

³¹ Pascual Chávez Villanueva, “Eu sou a videira, vós os ramos,” and “A vocação a permanecer sempre unidos a Jesus para ter a vida,” *Atos do Conselho Geral* 408 (2010): 14.

³² Trevizo, “Iglesia y prevención,” 13.

(ir)responsibility of all those who are part of the ecclesial institution, the corruption of its ecclesiology and the pathologization of the centrality of the Gospel.³³ One of these anomalous dynamics can be called “clericalism” that “arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation, that interprets the ministry received as a power to be exercised rather than as a free and generous service to be given Clericalism is a perversion and is the root of many evils in the Church.”³⁴ It is a matter of urgency that we undo the clerical ecclesial culture that permeates the entire process of formation. This especially the case given that such a culture is rooted in a skewed theology of ordained ministry, an outdated ecclesiological model, an outmoded way of exercising power and leadership by the hierarchy, a culture of secrecy, and a misguided theology of forgiveness. This must be replaced by an ecclesial culture that witnesses to God’s love and mercy towards those who are more vulnerable.³⁵

Conclusion

Human suffering touches the heart of God, and we can only imagine how a suffering that could be avoided would touch Him, as is the case with the sexual abuse of minors. No one is called to any kind of ministry that makes

³³ See the provocative reflection of Fabrizio Rinaldi, “Abusos, poder y educación,” in *Formación y prevención. La prevención de los abusos sexuales en los procesos formativos de la Iglesia*, ed. Daniel Portillo Trevizo (Boadilla del Monte, Madrid: PPC, 2019), 53–70.

³⁴ Pope Francis, “Address by His Holiness Pope Francis at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment,” www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/october/documents/papa-francesco_20181003_apertura-sinodo.html.

³⁵ See the important works that are in *Teología y prevención. Estudio sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia*, ed. D.P. Trevizo (Maliaño, Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2020): Rafael Luciani, “La renovación en la jerarquía eclesial por sí misma no general a transformación. Situar la colegialidad al interno de la sinodalidad,” 37–63; Sandra Arenas, “Desclericalización: antídoto para los abusos en la Iglesia,” 127–143; Eamonn Conway, “Clericalismo y violencia sexual. Explorando las implicaciones para la formación sacerdotal,” 145–172.

someone else suffer.³⁶ In the context of the sexual abuse, only caring and effective proximity to the victims can free us from ideological manipulations and connect us to the depth of the human person.

This raises three moral sentiments that dignify us: solidarity, the capacity of looking at those who suffer to see the face of one in pain; *mercy*, the capacity of having a heart that feels the cause of the pain of those who suffer; and *compassion*, the response generated by indignation. Compassion and indignation do not necessarily lead us to serve the other who is in pain. Mercy provides the authentic meaning for indignation and compassion, “promoting a shift in the existential and ethical place”³⁷ to guide us to be “Samaritans” in the life of those who suffer. Thus, we understand where and with whom we want to be.

In the context of the sexual scandals in the Church, it is also necessary to continually review the existing institutional culture and structures and adjust them to eliminate what would enable abuse to occur.³⁸ Such a review must go beyond creating policies that mitigate or limit legal and economic responsibilities that the institution has to the victims of abuse. Although important, they are not enough. We need policies to ensure that seminaries and religious communities educate all the members of the community—from those in the earliest stages of formation to those who are the leaders of the community—in all areas of healthy sexuality.³⁹

³⁶ José Luis Segovia Bernabé, “*Evangelii Gaudium*: desafíos desde la crisis,” in *Evangelii Gaudium y los desafíos pastorales para la Iglesia*, ed. J.L. Segovia Bernabé; A. Ávila Blanco, J.M. Velasco, and J.A. Pagola (Madrid: PPC, 2014), 45.

³⁷ Fernando Altemeyer Junior, “*Sujeitos da misericórdia*,” in *O imperativo ético da misericórdia*, ed. M.I.C. Millen and R. Zacharias (Aparecida: Santuário, 2016), 97–115.

³⁸ It is worth considering the reference to the linkage formation-sexual abuse proposed by Jesús Yovani Gómez Cruz, “El abuso sexual en el ambiente formativo,” in *Formación y prevención. La prevención de los abusos sexuales en los procesos formativos de la Iglesia*, ed. Daniel Portillo Trevizo (Boadilla del Monte, Madrid: PPC, 2019), 71–83. See also the works of Agenor Brighenti, *O novo rosto do clero. Perfil dos padres novos no Brasil* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2021); Enrico Brancozzi, *Rifare i preti. Come ripensare i seminari* (Bologna: EDB, 2021).

³⁹ See, for example, Karolin Kuhn and Hans Zollner, “Enseñar teología de una manera que fomente la formación humana y la prevención,” in *Formación y prevención. La prevención de los abusos sexuales en los procesos formativos de la Iglesia*, ed. Daniel Portillo Trevizo (Boadilla

Proactive polices oriented to the prevention of sexual abuse are also essential.⁴⁰ In other words, a change in individual behavior will not occur if there is no change in institutional behavior. This shift is essential for building a new formative culture that trains future priests and religious to be well integrated sexual persons.



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del Monte, Madrid: PPC, 2019), 85–108, and Ángela Rinaldi, “La importancia de la formación humana de los candidatos a la vida consagrada y religiosa para una cultura de la tutela de los menores,” in *Formación y prevención*, 109–133.

⁴⁰ Len Sperry, *Sexo, sacerdocio e Iglesia* (Maliaño, Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2004), 239.