

Newswe

August 16, 1993 \$2.95

CLINTON'S TAX HIT
How to Plan Ahead
BY JANE BRYANT QUINN

SEX AND THE CHURCH

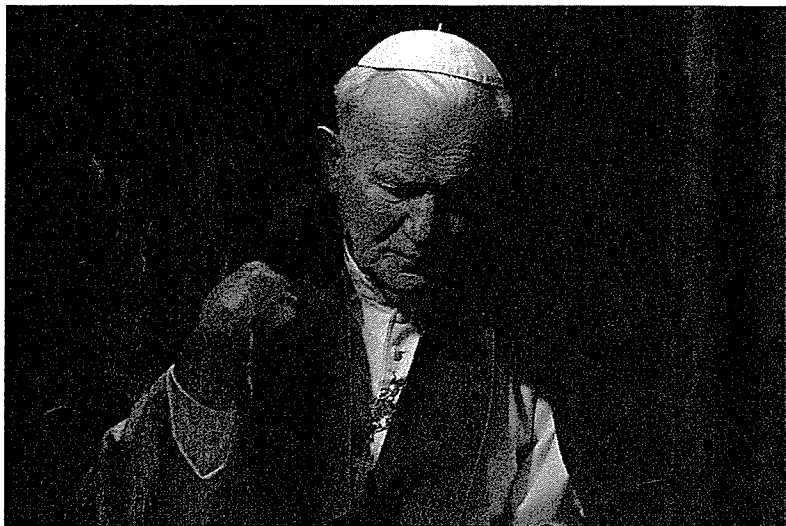
Abortion, Birth Control and the Pope

Priests and Child Abuse

Celibacy Isn't the Problem

BY FATHER ANDREW GREELEY





GIANNI GIANSAINTI—SYGMA

A pope's resolute standards challenge society's loosened mores

Sex and the Roman Catholic Church

When Pope John Paul II visits Denver this week, he'll find his American flock divided by the Vatican's opposition to contraception, homosexuality, abortion, marriage for priests and the ordination of women—and deeply troubled by the scandal of sexual abuse by priests. **Society:** Page 38



STEVE JAFFE—REUTER

Clinton and Vice President Al Gore celebrate their narrow victory

The Budget Deal: How Clinton Squeaked By

The president's joke about winning by a landslide didn't disguise how close—and politically risky—his victory was. NEWSWEEK reports on the feuding and the dealmaking, and Jane Bryant Quinn offers tax advice. **National Affairs:** Page 18

COVER: Photo by Michele Clement.

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Letters to the Editor should be sent to NEWSWEEK, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. In the U.S. send subscription inquiries to NEWSWEEK, The NEWSWEEK Building, Livingston, N.J. 07039-1666. NEWSWEEK (ISSN 0028-9604), August 16, 1993, Volume CXXII, No. 7. In Canada send subscription inquiries to NEWSWEEK, Inc., P.O. Box 4012, Postal Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W2K1. Canada Post International Publications Mail (Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 546593. Canadian GST No. 129-321-309. For all changes of address call 1-800-634-6850. For all other inquiries call 1-800-631-1040. Unless otherwise indicated by source or currency designation, all terms and prices are applicable in the U.S. only and may not apply in Canada. NEWSWEEK is published weekly, \$41.08 U.S. a year and \$61.88 Canadian a year, by NEWSWEEK, Inc., 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Richard M. Smith, Editor-in-Chief and President; Tina A. Ravitz, Secretary; Joanne O'Rourke Hindman, Controller. Second Class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTERS: Send address changes to NEWSWEEK, The NEWSWEEK Building, Livingston, N.J. 07039. Printed in U.S.A.

Mixed Blessings

John Paul II comes to America, where he'll be welcomed by a pro-choice president and celebrate with a church divided over sexual issues

POPE JOHN PAUL II ARRIVES in Denver this week "to celebrate life—the value of life, the beauty and joy of life." The occasion is World Youth Day, an international Roman Catholic jamboree that this pope has previously celebrated in Poland, Spain and Brazil—but never in the United States. Upwards of 500,000 Catholic pilgrims, the equal of Denver's population, are expected to descend on the city for the chance to pray with the pope and savor his moral exhortations. Every hotel room in Denver is taken and thousands of students from around the world will sleep in parking garages and abandoned stores. Moneyed pilgrims are renting private homes at up to \$20,000, depending on the papal view. Already, the World Youth Day committee has been accused of hoarding Porta Pottis needed in the flooded areas of the Middle West.

BY KENNETH L. WOODWARD

Some 3,000 journalists will be on hand, chiefly to cover the pope's first meeting—billed as a private, 45-minute chat on Thursday—with President Clinton. In a city that has already seen a summer upsurge in drive-by shootings and random violence, police and federal officials are bracing for a security nightmare.

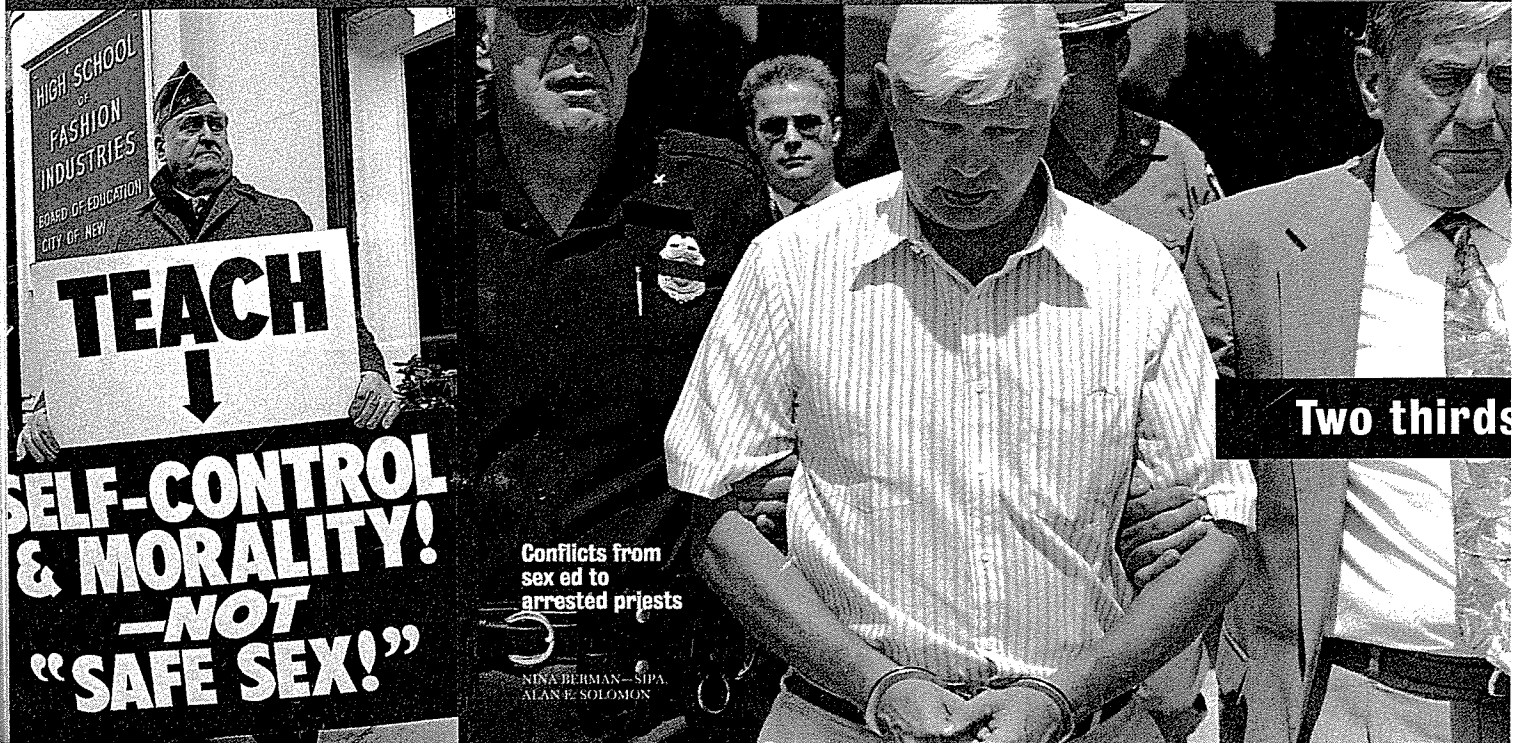
This will be the pope's third and shortest trip to the continental United States, and it may well turn out to be his most contested. On many of the emotion-laden issues now roiling the body politic, the Catholic Church stands firmly in opposition. The church says no to abortion, to premarital sex, to homosexuality and to contraception. Its bishops have fought against condom-distribution in public schools and the pope himself has rejected any change in the church's tradition of limiting the priesthood to celibate males. Though no longer prudish

in its view of human sexuality, the church refuses to muffle what it regards as Christ's own moral standards. But its witness is hobbled by the scandalous disclosures that hundreds of its priests have sexually abused the children in their care (page 42).

In Clinton, John Paul II meets for the first time a president of the United States who champions abortion rights and gay liberation. Clinton won office with strong support from feminist and homosexual groups—as well as 44 percent of the Catholic vote. But many Catholics are outraged by Clinton's nominee for surgeon general, Dr. Joycelyn Elders, who told a cheering pro-choice crowd last year that abortion's religious opponents were conducting "a love affair with the fetus" led by "a celibate, male-dominated church."

In their private conversation, the pope and the president are expected to focus on world issues of common concern like the war in Bosnia. A White House aide also

Sixty percent of Catholics say the church has been too lenient with



Conflicts from
sex ed to
arrested priests

NINA BERMAN—SIPA,
ALAN E. SOLOMON

Two thirds



...olesting priests



f Catholics say the church is wrong on birth control



In Denver, the pope and his foes will speak out

GIANNI GIANSANTI—SYGMA.
ANDERS LINDKVIST—SYGMA



Seventy percent of Catholics favor ordaining married men



ELEFTHERIOS-SIPA

As part of an Operation Rescue demonstration, Catholic priests in Philadelphia marched last month against abortion

anticipates that the pope will feel "a moral obligation" to state in private the church's case against abortion, especially as it relates to the president's domestic health-care reform. But in his public appeal to the Youth Day crowd, John Paul II will not pull punches. "Young people," he observed last month in a speech previewing his trip, are confronted with "a culture of death, often presented as the civilized achievement of new rights, but which, in fact, lays a trap for human life by preventing it through abortion from being born, or by extinguishing it through euthanasia."

The pope knows well that his own American flock is itself divided over specific issues of sex and gender. According to the latest NEWSWEEK Poll, U.S. Catholics have serious differences with official church teachings on such matters of conscience as birth control and the ordination of women and married men to the priesthood. On each topic, a majority differs with the Vatican's line. But despite that dissent, on other sexual issues American Catholics still exhibit certain common instincts. The majority of Catholics in the NEWSWEEK Poll think the church's position on abortion "is about right." On AIDS, American Catholics support perhaps the largest network of private services to victims

of that disease. But they resent groups like ACT UP, which has invaded Catholic churches on both coasts and desecrated the eucharist—and they wonder why the nation's press has been so slow to condemn such anti-Catholic assaults. If Catholics have doubts about the effect of abstinence as the answer to teenage pregnancy, many also think the free distribution of condoms is equally impractical, an enticement to promiscuity and an interference with parental rights. "We need to tell kids that they're not just victims of whatever urges come their way," says Dolores Leckey, an official of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

Curiously, this should be a season in which the Catholic leadership finds itself harmonizing nicely with the political tone of the times. At bottom, the church is preaching family values and concern for children—now standard parts of the contemporary political litany. What's different, of course, is that the church makes into moral teachings that which American pols would prefer to leave to choice and encouragement: united families, committed parents, even the dignity of labor.

The church's sexual ethic was never easy for Catholics to observe. But for most of American history, it was virtually indistinguishable from that of Protestants' and Jews'. Today marital fidelity is still the norm for millions of religious Americans, however they may fall short in practice. But within the last 30 years, the institutions of marriage and the family have suffered near collapse—and with them the old norms of acceptable sexual behavior. "Living in sin" is now a quaint concept and, for the young especially, "just do it" has the power of a cultural imperative.

For American Catholics, this recent and radical shift in sexual mores was accompanied by equally important changes within the church. As Catholics joined other Americans in the trek to the suburbs, observes Jesuit historian Gerald Fogarty of the University of Virginia, "the community bonds which reinforced church values about sex and marriage broke down." Sex,

NEWSWEEK POLL

Is the Catholic Church's position on the following . . .

	TOO CONSERVATIVE	TOO LIBERAL	ABOUT RIGHT	DON'T KNOW
Human sexuality	40%	7%	43%	10%
Abortion	41%	7%	43%	9%
AIDS	30%	6%	34%	30%
Birth control	62%	5%	27%	6%
Women's role in society	46%	6%	38%	10%

FOR THIS NEWSWEEK POLL, PRINCETON SURVEY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES TELEPHONED A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF 503 ADULT ROMAN CATHOLICS AUG. 3-5. THE MARGIN OF ERROR IS +/- 5 PERCENTAGE POINTS. © 1993 BY NEWSWEEK INC.

like religion, became a private matter and the authority of distant Rome to establish rules for sexual conduct grew suspect. Catholics learned through their own experience of marriage that sex is not dirty or the snare many of the clergy imagined it to be. But the main point on which Catholic teaching differed from that of other Christian churches was birth control. By 1968, most Catholics expected church authorities to change their traditional opposition to contraception. Then came the word from Rome: No.

THIS YEAR IS THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY of "Humanae Vitae" ("Of Human Life"), the encyclical of Pope Paul VI which reaffirmed the papal principle that every act of sexual intercourse must be "open to the transmission of life." Since then, most married Catholics and theologians alike have taken a different view: that contraception is a moral and practical necessity if spouses are to express their love and regulate the size of families. Out of this lived experience, most theologians now believe, Catholics have in fact reaffirmed the church's core teachings about human sexuality—that sexual intercourse represents the total giving of self to another, and that this gift finds meaning only within a faithful, fruitful marriage. Even so, the main impact of "Humanae Vitae" has been a quarter century of dissonance among Catholics and a drastic erosion of the very authority Pope Paul VI had sought to protect.

For the current generation of young Catholics, the church is no longer the authority in sexual matters that it was for their parents. Like many others, Ann Marie Kamensky, 30, still goes to mass on Sundays, but privately she disagrees with the church's stands on abortion, premarital sex and women priests. "I think faith is about trust," she says, "and I don't trust my church." For comfort, Kamensky has joined a feminist group of other Catholics who share her views. Yet, she acknowledges, the strain of trying to reconcile her morality with her religion "just leaves me torn up."

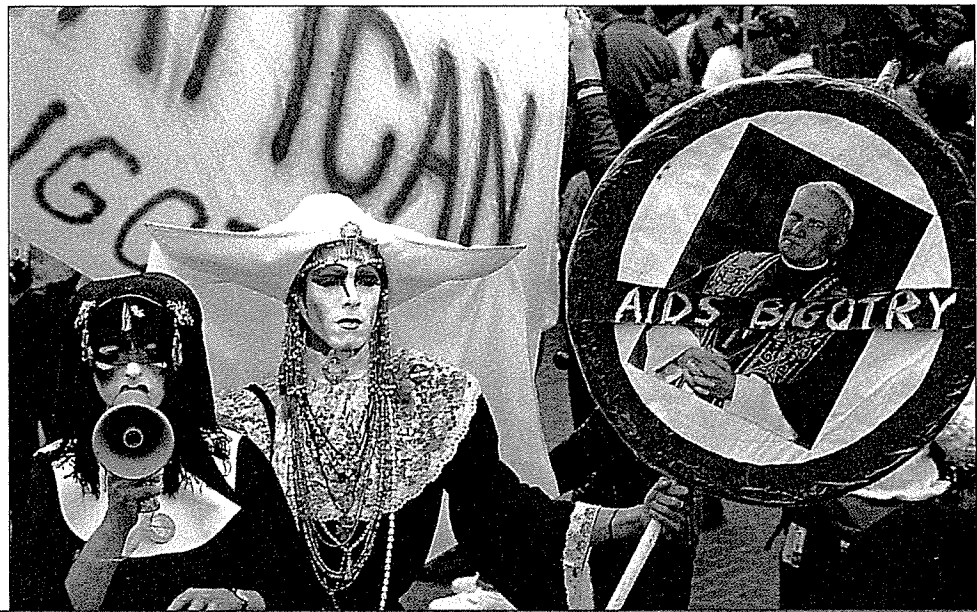
Indeed, what the pope has yet to contend with is the church's increasingly vocal majority: women. They now teach in Catholic seminaries, direct diocesan chanceries and in some parishes do everything a priest does but say mass and hear confessions. Though many are not contentious, they are constant reminders that the church has an attitude problem that even ordination of women to the priesthood won't solve. The church, says Lisa Sowle Cahill, a distin-

guished moral theologian at Boston College, needs to revise its "attitudes that women do not really have a right to control their fertility; that to avoid pregnancy and childbirth is to reject one's destiny of motherhood; that for women to seek roles outside of motherhood is selfish, narcissistic and materialist, and that self-sacrifice is a specifically 'feminine' duty."

The church is honeycombed with groups who want more: the democratic election of bishops, optional celibacy for priests, a declaration of rights for dissenting theologians and blessings on monogamous gay marriages. "You can be gay now in the church," says Jeffrey Janson, an artist in Chicago, "but you can't have sex. You can't

nal Commonweal, "gives us a kind of patience and willingness to work things out—qualities that are absent in the modern sex ethic." But the church isn't always there to help. When Patricia Cahill, a 31-year-old Chicago woman who was married last weekend, went to her parish priest for mandatory marriage instructions, she didn't hide the fact that she'd been living with her fiancé—or that she intended to use contraceptives. The priest, who is in his 70s, "had his head down and never even looked up," Cahill recalls. "I felt so sorry for him because he seemed so nervous about having this conversation."

Indeed, in their passion not to appear authoritarian, many priests have failed to



Almost two thirds think women should be priests

P. FORDEN—SYGMA

even masturbate, so what do you do?"

But for most adult Catholics these concerns are peripheral compared with the routine moral problems young people face. The United States has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the industrialized West, and a divorce rate to match. Fear of AIDS and date rape and confused gender roles have further complicated the road to sexual maturity. Studies show that those who enjoy the presence, stability and love of two parents tend to do better in school, in their emotional lives and in building marriages of their own. "Permanence, commitment, fidelity—this is what people want even if they haven't experienced it in their own families," says Paulist Father Michael Hunt, Catholic chaplain at Tufts University.

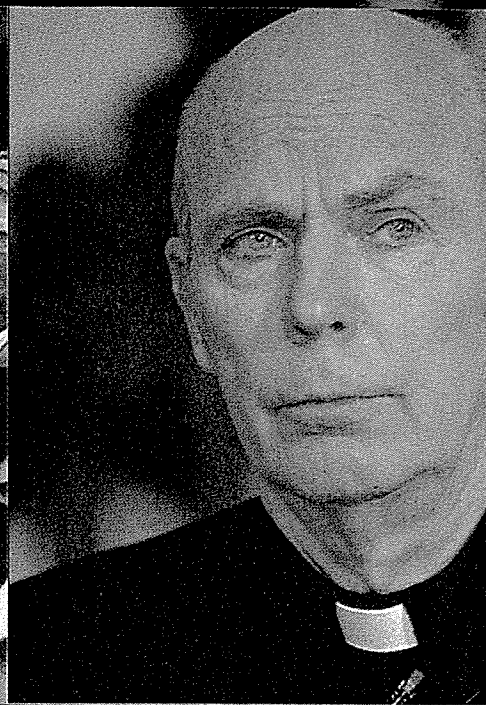
"The idea that husband and wife are in this together," says Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds, editor of the liberal Catholic jour-

nal Commonweal, "gives us a kind of patience and willingness to work things out—qualities that are absent in the modern sex ethic." But the church isn't always there to help. When Patricia Cahill, a 31-year-old Chicago woman who was married last weekend, went to her parish priest for mandatory marriage instructions, she didn't hide the fact that she'd been living with her fiancé—or that she intended to use contraceptives. The priest, who is in his 70s, "had his head down and never even looked up," Cahill recalls. "I felt so sorry for him because he seemed so nervous about having this conversation."

Indeed, in their passion not to appear authoritarian, many priests have failed to

Protesting the church's position on homosexuality

With DEBRA ROSENBERG in Boston, VICKI QUADE in Chicago and CAREY MONSERRATE in New York



Only 44 percent would

Priests and Abuse

The sins of the Fathers: the Roman Catholic Church is starting to confront a lingering scandal

IT MAY BE THE SWEETEST SCENE IN the Gospels. As parents brought their babies to Jesus for a blessing, his disciples—history's first overprotective advance men—turned the families away. Quickly, Jesus put a stop to that. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," he says, according to Luke. "For of such is the kingdom of God."

It took two millennia and men like Father David Holley to corrupt that message. Beginning in the early 1970s, even as he was finishing up a stay in a "treatment" center, Holley was molesting boys as young as 11. On the secluded roads of rural New Mexico, in the back of his parish church, on his cool kitchen floor, according to court testimony, he fondled them, he masturbated them, he performed oral sex on them. He showed them sexually explicit photos and announced, "I'm going to teach you guys how to be men." He did something rather different. "At 11 or 12, you don't know what's going on," says Noel Clark, one of Holley's victims. "The priest who's been approved by your parents is saying, 'It's OK, this is normal.' I don't know if anyone can understand the guilt you feel at a moral level. You can never have a good day." In March, Holley, now 65, pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting eight boys. Two months

ago a judge in Alamogordo, N.M., sentenced him to 275 years in prison; Holley will be eligible for parole in 18 years.

By then, perhaps, the fallout from the worst clerical scandal in the modern history of the U.S. Catholic Church will have passed. It's been building now for a decade. Stunning, mortifying charges have wounded many of the nation's 188 dioceses. Covenant House, the program that serves runaway children, was badly damaged after its founder, Father Bruce Ritter, was forced to resign amid allegations of sexual and financial misconduct. (Ritter denied the charges.) While allegations have been lodged against an estimated 400 priests since 1982, some churchmen extrapolate that as many as 2,500 priests have molested children or teenagers. Compounding the crisis, the church was slow to recognize the seriousness of its problem and the furious backlash that was building among a network of "survivors," some of whom are now seeking—and winning—big damage awards.

More than money, the scandal has cost the church severe embarrassment—and some of its moral authority. The priesthood remains a caste apart, one that renounced all sexual activity, let alone deviant behavior with minors. The errant priests, then,

appear guilty not only of perversion but hypocrisy, too. "We grew up with such respect for 'Father,'" says Rhode Island attorney Richard Cappalli, who is pressing several abuse suits. "We looked up to our teachers, to our Scout leaders, but not like we did to the priest. He was next to God." The scandal suggests that at critical times the church seemed most concerned with protecting its own personnel. The clerical hierarchy and the church's therapists failed to deter sexual abuse, averted their eyes or, amazingly, covered up the sins of their fathers. Indeed, documents uncovered in lawsuits show bishops recommending the purging not of priests but of their personnel files, lest they become weapons in lawsuits. The result, critics charge, is plain: the church failed its children.

The church has taken a fearsome beating in the courts, the press and the pews. According to the NEWSWEEK Poll, about two thirds of the American Catholics surveyed think that the church has treated abusive priests too leniently. They also think abusers should be defrocked immediately, rather than sent off for treatment.

Now the church has begun to respond. Leading bishops—including Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago and Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston—have ordered searches of diocesan personnel records to root out evidence of clerical abuse. In February, the National Conference of Bishops heard a panel of 31 experts describe "the sustained crisis" in the church and issued a detailed call for action. In June, the bishops appointed a committee to draft an action plan. Two weeks later New York's Cardinal John O'Connor—like many diocesan leaders before him—announced a program to



ke a child to become a priest or nun

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BILL POWERS—SIPA, ALLAN TANNENBAUM—SYGMA, FERNANDO T. GARCIA

streamline the investigation of abuse charges. "It is long since time," he declared, "to get down on our knees, to beat our breasts, to ask God's mercy."

Pope John Paul II spoke publicly for the first time on the issue in June, expressing sorrow for the victims and dismay over the demoralization of the church. While the American bishops publicly welcomed the pope's words, NEWSWEEK has learned that privately they had hoped for more. American emissaries to the Vatican had urged the pope to speed procedures for defrocking sexually abusive priests. Instead he appointed another commission to explore the issue.

Throughout the church's damage-control campaign, bishops complained that the press was making too much of a handful of cases. At one point, Cardinal Law even "called down God's power . . . on the [Boston] Globe," one of the most aggressive pursuers of the story. But for the victims, most of whom say they had either repressed their memories or suffered in silence, retribution—divine or otherwise—was long overdue. Survivors, as they call themselves, readily share tales of indifference and hostility from church leaders when they tried to tell their stories. Barbara Blaine, director of the 1,200-member SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests), says she felt vilified by the church's comments to the press after she reported an alleged incident of abuse. Jeanne Miller of The Linkup, another victims group, says that it took nine years, other incidents and a criminal indictment before the archdiocese in Chicago removed from parish work the priest she sued for

allegedly molesting her son. After the indictment, Cardinal Bernardin apologized publicly. For a decade, the priest had been shuffled among parishes, despite accusations of sexual misconduct.

These cases have a powerful effect on families and parishes. David Clohessy, now 36, says that in 1989 he began suffering flashbacks to three years of abuse that he says he suffered at the hands of a Missouri priest when he was a teenager. When Clohessy brought his memories to the local diocese, he says he was rebuffed. Frustrated, he filed suit against the diocese and the priest, who refused to comment. His family was badly divided. His wife worried that

Priests in trouble: Porter (left) and Holley (far right) went to jail, Ritter resigned

people would think "he was gay." Clohessy's parents stood by him but relations were severed with his brother, a priest. "Many people leave the church, but I feel I was almost driven away," he says. "I was helpless as a kid; I'm not helpless now."

The scandal has forced a sense of caution on innocent, active Catholic priests. "I know a lot of priests who work with youth who don't do things now that they would have done 10 years ago," says the Rev. Dr. John Beal, a Catholic University professor. "I don't know anyone who would go camping with the Boy Scouts without another adult present." Maybe that's not so bad, think some ardent parishioners. "I don't feel bad that parents feel more concerned about their children," says Barbara Violante, a mother of five daughters in Chicago, who has grown more cautious, too. "It's actually a good thing for the kids."

How did the church allow itself to get into this position? Part of the explanation is historic: in the not-so-distant past, claims of child abuse were not taken as seriously as they are today. And that's as true for schoolteachers as for clerics. Also, the church clearly felt—and feels—a duty to its priests. These are, after all, Christians who celebrate the possibility of redemption and forgiveness. And the church has a system of rules—canon laws—that require care and due process in the filing of charges. Sadly, these attitudes and procedures allowed the scandal to grow. In the case of Father Holley, for instance, good intentions paved the road to disaster. In a sworn affidavit he filed last month, Holley says that his "psycho-sexual disorder" first appeared in 1962 when he was just a young assistant pastor in the diocese of Worcester, Mass.

"On at least two occasions," he says, his bishop called him in to discuss "the allegations . . . that I had sexually molested boys in the . . . parishes." Holley was cautioned, he says, against causing a "scandal." In 1968, the bishop sent Holley to a priest-psychiatrist, claiming he had molested two teenage boys. A month later he was transferred to another parish and instructed to see a doctor "on a regular basis." The next year he checked himself into a psychiatric institute. Upon release, the bishop refused him a parish assignment. In 1971, the bishop sent him off for help again, this time to a church-run treatment center in New Mexico. A cover letter from the bishop expresses doubt that Holley will be able "to resume an effective ministry for a long time, if ever."

That mild warning wasn't heeded. Once in New Mexico, according to his affidavit, Holley was sent to a residence where he received little therapy. He says that almost immediately he was given weekend assignments in Albuquerque's surrounding parishes. His supervisor

NEWSWEEK POLL

It would be a good thing if women were allowed to be ordained as priests.

In 1974 . . .	In 1993 . . .
29% Agreed	62% Agree
65% Disagreed	31% Disagree

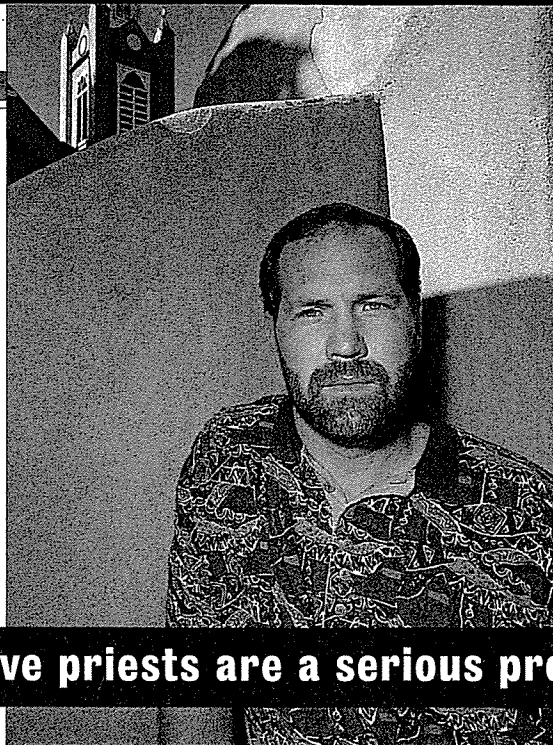
It would be a good thing if married men were allowed to be ordained as priests.

In 1974 . . .	In 1993 . . .
53% Agreed	71% Agree
36% Disagreed	25% Disagree

GALLUP, 1974; THE NEWSWEEK POLL OF CATHOLICS, AUG. 3-5, 1993

sent positive reports back to Massachusetts. In 1972, with the approval of the Worcester diocese, Holley started working in Alamogordo, and, as the criminal case showed, his pattern of child abuse resumed. Besides his jail term, Holley and the church face at least 17 civil actions brought by Bruce Pasternack, an Albuquerque lawyer. The church said it could not comment.

Warnings of cases such as these were raised at the highest level of the American church. In 1985, two priests, one a canon lawyer, the other a psychiatrist,



DAN PEEBLES

Two thirds say abusive priests are a serious problem

wrote a prescient and alarming report for the semiannual meeting of the bishops. According to Jason Berry, author of a history of the sexual-abuse scandal called "Lead Us Not Into Temptation," the report called for more serious counseling, recommended that guilty priests be removed from the church and urged the bishops not to cover up. The report was largely ignored and now, says Berry, "the church is in a historical crisis."

As the scandal drags on, it has become subject to exaggeration. Some key questions:

Is child abuse a disease of the celibate, Catholic clergy? The short answer is no. Until recently, children were taught to stay away from strange men wearing raincoats, not Roman collars, and that advice is still sound. "Pedophiles cut across all socioeconomic, educational and professional groups," says Dr. William Foote, a forensic psychologist in Albuquerque. In addition, says Margretta Dwyer of the University of Minnesota's Sex Offender Treatment Program, research shows that at least one third of pedophiles are married. The problem—or fear of the problem—is now held so widely that next month the Boy Scouts will hold a national conference on the prevention of abuse. "Child abuse is a problem that affects organizations that deal with youth," says spokesman Greg Graze. "The Scouts remain far safer than the outside world, but we can't afford to turn our backs on the issue."

"Unfortunately, pedophilia is ecumenical," says Episcopal priest Margaret Graham, who served as president of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse before she was ordained. Indeed, the Cranston, R.I.-based Survivor Connections group has tallied reports of 508 cases of alleged clerical abuse of youngsters. While most involve Catholic priests,

Like Noel Clark, some victims no longer suffer in silence

their records include charges lodged against Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and Greek Orthodox clergy. But in at least one sense, there may be an unexpected connection between celibacy and child abuse, according to Dr. James Gill, a Jesuit and psychiatrist at the Institute of Living in Hartford, Conn. "Just like a criminal might become a policeman, some young people deep down fear their sexual inclinations and think the ambience and lifestyle of the priesthood will protect them from acting out their sexual urges."

Are the priests accused of abuse in fact pedophiles? Actually, nearly all fall into a different category of perversion, technically known as "ephebophilia." The difference has to do with age and development. Pedophiles are attracted to prepubescent children; ephebophiles are attracted to youngsters in puberty or just emerging. The

NEWSWEEK POLL
Do you or do other Catholics you know personally use artificial birth control?

63% Yes
 24% No

Do you personally know any Catholic woman who has had an abortion?

34% Yes
 62% No

THE NEWSWEEK POLL OF CATHOLICS, AUG 3-5, 1993

appeal, explains Brainard Hines, a Miami sexual-abuse counselor, "is the innocence of a child in a more adult body." Nearly all the abusers are men; most victims are boys.

Can priest abusers be cured? Professional counselors compare the illness to alcoholism or drug addiction: tendencies that can be arrested but never fully eradicated. Counseling, group therapy, behavior modification, sex-suppressant drugs, even electric shock all form elements in a treatment plan. But the church and its therapists have learned two important lessons: don't expect to solve the problem through prayer alone, and don't reassign errant priests to work with kids.

Is the church screening seminarians more effectively? By all accounts, it is. The church has been helped by advances in psychological testing that are aimed at uncovering potential sexual abusers. "It's like night and

day," says Father Ron Wolf, chancellor of the Santa Fe archdiocese. "We're taking a laser-beamed eye at people who want to enter our seminary." And, he says, the archdiocese now demands to know about any history of sexual misconduct of priests seeking to transfer in. "In the old days, we didn't even ask," he says.

Will there be more scandals? Yes. In October, the trial of ex-priest James Porter is due to begin in Massachusetts. He's charged with 41 counts of sexual molestation, and has pleaded not guilty. (In related civil suits; the church has reportedly already settled 68 claims for \$5 million.) The Porter trial will revive the issue because in many respects his case brought the scandal to national attention. In May 1992, police investigators say Porter told them that while he was a priest in New England he had molested many children. After that disclosure, 127 adults stepped forward, asserting that they had been some of his victims. In December, Porter was convicted for molesting his daughter's teenage babysitter in Minnesota. His new trial will be well covered by the media and may lead to other cases. Law firms around the country have developed specialties in suing the church; in one case, plaintiffs even used the federal racketeering law, alleging an official cover-up of sexual abuse by priests.

It is some comfort for the church that nearly all these cases involve old-school priests and years-old crimes. The wounds to the victims are deep, the stain on the vestments indelible. Fair or not, the sins of the Fathers will continue to be visited upon a new generation of clergy and congregants.

ARIC PRESS with CAROLYN FRIDAY in Boston, NINA BIDDLE in Albuquerque, TODD BARRETT in Chicago, SUSAN MILLER in Miami and bureau reports

A View From the Priesthood

It's bigotry to blame celibacy for church problems

BEATRICE DE PLANISSOLES, THE CHATELaine in Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie's documentary history of 14th-century Montaillou in southern France, insisted that she preferred priests as lovers because priests were more tender and sensitive. Her lovers included four priests (one set up a bed inside the parish church), two husbands and several laymen. Her story typifies the history of clerical celibacy: it was honored more in some times and places than in other times and places. For much of the history of the peasant priesthood in Europe, the barely literate cleric who worked in the fields beside the members of the flock needed a woman to survive; one set of hands was not enough. In some dioceses the matter was handled discreetly: a tax was imposed on "married" priests—a tax for the woman and an additional tax for each child.

The married Greek Catholic clergy prove that celibacy is not essential to the priesthood. The rule could be changed without the need to change any Catholic doctrine. As a layman remarked to me, "I don't care who a priest sleeps with after 10 o'clock at night, so long as he's a priest until then."

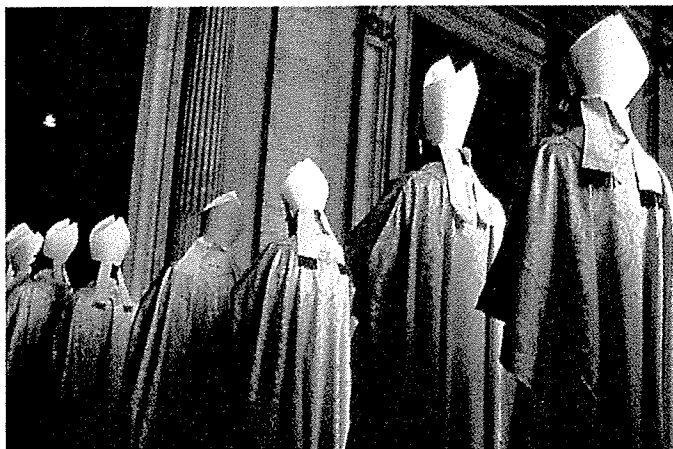
Nonetheless, it is intellectually dishonest Catholic-bashing to blame celibacy for the problems of the church or the priesthood. The lower clergy (parish priests) are as likely to reject the Vatican's rigid approach to marital sex as are the laity. Priests do not have the emotional maturity of 13-year-olds, as ex-priest A. W. Richard Sipe has argued. Studies of representative samples of priests (which his samples are not) show that they are as mature and as capable of interpersonal intimacy as are married men of similar age and education. Nor are priests desperately unhappy or unfulfilled. Psychologist Thomas Nestor of Boston, in a study of Chicago priests, found that they were *more* likely to be satisfied with their work and their careers and their lives than a comparable sample of laymen. Priests may be the happiest men in America (or perhaps only the least unhappy). The shortage of priestly vocations is the result not of celibacy but of the lack of recruiting by the two principal recruitment officers—priests and mothers. The notion that celibacy is any more difficult in America today than it was 40 years ago, when my generation went into the priesthood, is hilarious. It's always been difficult and never impossible, not if a man is happy in his work. Most priests still try to honor their pledge.

Finally, as someone who has been warning the church about the sexual-abuse problem since 1986, I insist that it is intolerable anti-Catholic bigotry to blame the present crisis of sexual abuse of young people by priests on celibacy. A certain proportion of priests (3.27 percent in the Archdiocese of Chicago) abuse children not because they are sexually starved but because their "love maps"—their

BY ANDREW GREELEY

objects of sexual desire—have been vandalized in childhood experiences of their own. Pedophilia, in whatever form, would be the result of celibacy if, and *only if*, it were not also a problem among others working in the professions that have access to children. Most pedophiles are married men. If the priest pedophiles were married they would continue to prey on children, perhaps their own children. Nor can the pedophile problem be blamed on "unhealthy" attitudes toward sex among Roman Catholics that have been created by celibacy. In fact, as research done by the National Opinion Research Center and by The Gallup Organization demonstrates, Catholics have sex more often, are more playful in their sex lives and enjoy sex more than Protestants. They also are more tolerant of homosexuals.

In the present context, I do not intend to argue either for or against celibacy. I object rather to its becoming a scapegoat for every problem in the priesthood and in the church. I charge church leaders—all the way up to the top—with failure to make the case for it by any other argument than, "This is the law. Period." My research shows, for example, that a confidant relationship between a celibate priest and a married woman produces a payoff in marital happiness and sexual fulfillment



Almost two thirds would defrock abusive priests



In ceremonial single file, bishops arrive for a Vatican synod

GIANNI GIANSAINTI—SYGMA

of women, tomorrow if possible. Finally I argue for a "priest" corps, like the Peace Corps, in which men (and I hope women) make commitments to the priesthood for limited terms. It would be an obvious adaptation to changing life expectancy: a man will be a priest now for 50 years instead of 12, as was the case only a century ago.

If someone burns out after a couple of terms or can no longer stand teenage noise or wants to start a family of his own, let him go forth in dignity and gratitude. Why assume that the priesthood in this age of long life expectancy must be a lifetime vocation? Anyone who can put up with teenage noise after 40 either is weird or has special gifts of nature and grace. It is not fair to demand this of all priests. That I still enjoy working with noisy teenagers, young men and women (the latter more) may say something about me. Or about a certain kind of celibacy.

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