

## **A Moral Issue Only? Assessing Theologically the Sexual Abuses of the Catholic Church**

The public image of the Roman Catholic Church emerging out of the sexual abuse scandals is that of a disrupted institution going through a season of internal turmoil. Having several top leaders (cardinals, bishops, priests) and institutions (seminaries, schools, the Vatican curia itself) incriminated for either abusing children or covering up abuse undermines the moral, spiritual, and institutional credibility of Rome. A significant factor in determining the present-day moral disaster lies at the very heart of the theology of the Roman Church. After surveying the relevant reports that show the self-protecting attitude of Rome, the session will seek to argue that the problem has to do with the Roman theology of authority that warrants the primacy of the interest of the church over biblical truth and public transparency.

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### I. “The 9/11 of the Catholic Church” (Msgr G. Gänswein)

A. A Systemic and Global Phenomenon

B. The Long History of Sexual Abuses in the RCC

C. The Top RC Leadership Involved

### II. What is the Problem then?

A. Clericalism (Pope Francis)

B. Homosexual Lobbies (Msgr Carlo Viganò)

### III. The Theological Issues

- A. The “In Persona Christi” understanding of Priesthood
- B. The Issue of Authority and the Corrupting effect of Power
- C. The Rule of Celibacy
- D. The Culture of Coercion: controlling consciences and imposing silence

### IV. Conclusion: Opportunities for Gospel witness

#### ***Suggested Readings:***

F. Martel, *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* (London-New York: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2019)

C. Abate, *Sex and the Vatican* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2011)  
[www.vaticanfiles.org](http://www.vaticanfiles.org)