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Lead Us Not  
into Temptation

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CATHOLIC PRIESTS

*and the*

SEXUAL ABUSE

*of*

CHILDREN

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Foreword by  
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URBANA AND CHICAGO



Hilary Stiles. She also earned a master's in theology and then enrolled in law school. "We were both raised Catholic; it was the formation of our values and beliefs and morals. I discovered a lot of myths in the litigation process. I couldn't go back to Mass. I couldn't tolerate the hypocrisy. My husband became a Eucharistic minister. I separated myself from the religion; the structure is insane. I felt I had to go beyond the institution to resume my faith life." In 1988 the couple divorced.

In a brief telephone interview, Serritella declined to discuss any litigation involving the archdiocese. Asked about general issues that a given diocese faces in such cases, he told me: "There are a lot of issues. An issue of fact: did the person do it? Second is whether there was any prior knowledge on the part of a supervisor. Third is whether a person had been screened for his or her position." Asked to discuss the archdiocesan policy toward child abuse accusations, he said: "I am not authorized to speak on their legal matters. . . . Our firm is not a spokesman for any clients unless specifically authorized to do so."

When I embarked on a *Chicago Reader* assignment, Bernardin and other church officials declined my interview requests. But in the January 12, 1990, edition of the archdiocesan weekly paper, *New World*, Bernardin said of the archdiocese's attitude in such cases: "The child and family are handled with sensitivity and compassion." Detailed guidelines by the vicar for priests were promulgated in a February 28, 1990, letter to local clergy:

*[P]ainstaking efforts are made to get to the truth of the situation. Complete cooperation is given to civil authorities investigating such cases. Counseling is provided for the victims. Psychiatric evaluation of the accused is required. Depending on the findings, the appropriate remedial steps are taken.*

On paper it looked good. But Jeanne Miller and the cardinal were destined to meet again.

Published by an obscure New Mexico press, *Assault on Innocence* was Miller's vehicle to survivors in other states. In May 1988 she flew to Seattle for KING-TV's "Good Company" talk show. A young priest had just been accused of molesting five minors, jolting that archdiocese. Using her pseudonym, Jeanne's story echoed powerfully in the lives of two women who had embarked on the same quest—to hold the church accountable.

Adele Doran, a research analyst for the Republican State Senate Caucus, lived in Federal Way, south of Seattle. Maryalyce Ebert Stamatiou, a nurse, lived north of the city in Snohomish.

Adele was raised in Illinois. Her father was not just an alcoholic. "My mother died without knowing that he molested me," she recalls. "I rolled up in a ball and pretended to be asleep. I was the middle child of five and didn't have a real good feeling about myself." In the third grade her parents divorced. She lived with her father until the ninth grade when he placed her in an orphanage run by a priest and nuns: "It was the happiest period of my life. I began to feel loved." Two years later she returned to her mother and never saw her father again.

At nineteen she moved to Washington State and, like many Adult Children of



Alcoholics (ACOA), she married another ACOA. By age twenty-five she had five kids. Once all were in school she became a paralegal. Over the years her husband's drinking worsened. She decided on intervention, a confrontation to break defenses and get the alcoholic into treatment. A priest friend made her promise to move out if her husband refused. The children were now grown.

When intervention failed, she left. "I tried so hard. For years I covered up for my children's dad. He didn't drink at home but he was never around. I never had family to help me. I had a great deal of faith, and prayed, *God, don't let me be bitter.* The kids didn't think I could do it on my own."

She read about a priest taking in street children in Colima, Mexico. "I went there as a way of thanking God for helping me on this difficult journey. Casa San Jose was a reconverted pig barn. I woke the kids, helped with breakfast, scrubbed the floor, got rid of lice, and worked with kids individually." A year later she returned to Seattle and landed a good job in politics. Then, in 1981, a teenager named Theresa committed suicide by throwing herself in front of Adele's car. Investigators found that Theresa was an incest victim. In the aftershock, Adele resolved that God wanted her to feel Theresa's pain for a reason. Just when she had found serenity as a Eucharistic minister, a girl died, a girl like the one she herself had been. What if someone had helped Theresa earlier? What if, what if, what if?

Plunging into research, she published a long report for the Senate GOP Caucus, "Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation," and began organizing forums on the topic. After one, a dark-haired young woman confided that she had been abused as a child. Adele said that if she needed help, just call.

Maryalyce Ebert was also an ACOA. Her father's drinking left a dysfunctional family long after he found sobriety. And like Adele, Maryalyce was an incest survivor, repeatedly molested as a child by a brother, and later by an uncle. When the uncle died she began recovering suppressed memories. In 1986, married with five kids, she wanted to confront the brother she feared. One day at a hospital she bumped into a chaplain, James McGreal, who had once been a close family friend, taking her two brothers skiing. Although she had not seen him in years, Father Jim's photograph hung in her parents' home. Now he was remote. Only when she reminded him of her brothers did he ask about her parents.

She had severed ties with her brothers, John and Gregory, both of whom had molested kids. John was in San Diego, sunk in drugs. Therapy had taught Maryalyce about dealing with addictive behavior like John's. After listening to women at Adele's conference, she flew to San Diego and confronted John; he startled her with bitter talk of how Father Jim had molested him. Numb, she returned to Seattle and had a cathartic discussion with her parents: Greg had told them the same thing.

She believed that John had done to her what McGreal had sexually imprinted on him. Father Jim fired her rage. In autumn, 1986, her mother died. After the shroud of bereavement fell away she wanted to make sure McGreal was not preying on kids. He had left the hospital. A nun at the archdiocese said he was out of state on a continuing education program. In fact, he was at the Paracletes' facility in New Mexico. McGreal was fortunate: the criminal statute of limitations had expired, and the Seattle to which he returned had solid programs for pedophiles.



Tim Smith, a therapist experienced with offenders and victims, served with Lucy Berliner, research director of Harborview Medical Center's sex offenders unit, on a commission authorized by Archbishop Hunthausen to develop an archdiocesan policy for pedophilia cases—a pioneering effort, all things considered. But McGreal had never been criminally charged; what then was the church's obligation to his victims? None, a lawyer might argue, barring litigation. Sister Fran Ferder, who directed the archdiocesan counseling center, felt otherwise. Ferder had to approve a living arrangement for McGreal. Smith, his therapist, wanted a monitored environment with other clergy. Maryalyce told the chancery that if she couldn't see Father Jim the press would get her story. Smith and Ferder agreed that McGreal should face his past. At Smith's office in July 1987, Maryalyce took notes at the confrontation.

McGreal admitted molesting John but remarked of Greg: "I can't believe he would say something like that." She asked why her brother would lie about something like that. "I don't know," said McGreal. "Maybe he was angry at me." Denial was a sickness, so she told him how John, at thirteen, had begun molesting her when she was four, and how a childless uncle saw them and moved on her when John joined the Navy. She told him how Greg had run pornographic movie houses in a string of cities and was involved in filming some, how he molested both his kids and got John involved in the same theater chain for nine years until John's wife left him after he got shot in a porn-film dispute. "This is the legacy of sexual abuse in my family that you contributed to!" she shouted at McGreal.

Smith suggested that McGreal discuss his past. "Well," said Father Jim, legs crossed, eyes closed, "I was molested by a priest when I was thirteen. My mom and dad were having a lot of trouble with their marriage and went to him for counseling. They held him in very high regard. How could I tell them what he'd done to me? So I just kept all of the anger in and later projected that anger on my victims." Maryalyce asked if he saw parallels with her family. "Yes," he said, "all of it."

"You knew Dad was not a terribly affectionate man and you knew about his drinking."

"Yes, I was helping him with that," said McGreal.

"You took advantage of your knowledge, betrayed my parents' trust and respect, and you betrayed and violated those boys!"

"I've always had a problem rationalizing a parental role with children," he said. "There's been problems in the families and I've always had a problem stepping into an emotional vacuum, with how I interpret what others want from me. I can't keep my hands off them. They want one thing and I think they want something completely different."

Tim Smith told her: "Jim is very good at desensitizing himself. . . . He can be totally out of touch with what you're saying."

She asked when he started molesting and he said when he was twenty-seven. He was then sixty-four. He said he was dismissed from the hospital for fondling a young patient's thigh. As he discussed the Paraclete program she realized the chancery had lied to her about his "continuing education." Sensitive to her pain, Smith said Jim's treatment could not quickly undo a pattern of thirty years. He lived with a group where all knew of his addiction and defenses. "I sure am sorry for what I have done," said McGreal. "I know my actions have hurt people."



His apology seemed terribly hollow to her.

Not long after that she discovered that his treatment was not secluded: a priest told her that McGreal was living in the rectory of St. Theresa's in Federal Way and was a regular celebrant at Mass. Adele Doran: "After twenty-five conferences on child abuse, I knew it was a matter of time before I found a priest. When Maryalyce told me it was my parish, I cried for three nights. Then I asked the pastor, Joe Kramis, a personal friend, to come over. I told him parishioners had to know. He asked for time to discuss it with the priests' council." Kramis assured her that McGreal had no contact with children; but Adele knew he had befriended an older couple, who provided day care for their two grandchildren. On December 18, 1987, Maryalyce wrote Hunthausen:

*You have set an example to your people and the entire church on your stand against nuclear weapons . . . and then not once, not twice, but three times [referring to victims of McGreal], take this man, who has scarred God knows how many beautiful young boys' lives—you take him and reshuffle him around from one place to another. Sir, with all due respect, this is an atrocity . . . Please remove Fr. McGreal from his priestly duties . . . where he will never hurt another child.*

On February 10, 1988, the week after the USCC issued its pedophilia statement, Hunthausen wrote back that sexual abuse of children was an area he was "just beginning to recognize in its totality."

The prelate expressed his sadness over the impact of McGreal's "disorder" on her family, and assured her that his current assignment—in "limited ministry" and not involved "directly with young people"—had been made after consulting with therapists. He offered consolation, saying, "I know my words can in no way make up for the deep wounds caused you and your brothers," and asked her prayers for him and his advisors, as he would be praying for her.

But his soothing words stopped short of what she wanted. Adele implored the Rev. George Thomas, the chancellor, to remove McGreal. After coadjutor Archbishop Thomas Murphy spoke at the parish, Adele and several friends followed him to his car. She had a memo requesting that McGreal be moved and parishioners be told. Murphy refused to take it. She continues: "Father Kramis called with a message from the archdiocese: they would sue me for breaking confidentiality if we made public disclosure about McGreal. I said, 'Nothing's ever been told to me in confidence.'"

Seven months after Maryalyce's letter, McGreal was still in the rectory when Father Paul Conn, in Port Angeles, was indicted on five counts of taking indecent liberties with young boys. (Conn later went to jail.) The archdiocese provided therapy for the victims. When Adele learned that KING-TV's "Good Company" was planning an edition on the topic, she told Maryalyce, who called the producer. Adele went to the rectory and told McGreal that, if he did not vacate, Maryalyce would go public. "She's out for revenge," McGreal fumed. "She's a victim," countered Adele. "I've never been challenged like this," said McGreal. Adele replied: "That's too bad. If you need someone to talk with, come see me."

Stomach churning, Maryalyce sat in the studio audience, listening to "Hilary Stiles"—as Jeanne Miller was identified. When the interviewer turned, Maryalyce stood and in a choking voice told her story about a priest in Federal Way—



omitting his name. Federal Way had two Catholic parishes and switchboards at both were bombarded with calls.

The onus now shifted to the church. Tipped by Adele, *Seattle Times* reporter Carol M. Ostrom attended Mass at St. Theresa's on Sunday, May 22. Neither parish, pastor, nor McGreal was named in Ostrom's first report. After communion, Kramis told the flock: "Father McGreal is a pedophile." Faces crumbled. A wide-eyed couple stared; an older couple gasped. "His really is a success story," continued Kramis, as waves of emotion rocked his flock. He told them counselors would be on hand after the service, and an upcoming parish meeting would be open to all. "Clearly, it's the secrecy that has angered many at Father Doe's parish," wrote Ostrom. She quoted the unnamed pastor (Kramis): "Because there's a small area of his life that's dysfunctional, I don't think you should take away his opportunity to give his gifts to others."

Back-to-back revelations about pedophiles now jeopardized Hunthausen, whose grace under Vatican pressure the year before had made him a hero to many. Hunthausen reached for high ground in a May 25 public letter, identifying McGreal, hoping "to break the cycle of silence that perpetuates abuse in the human family."

*I want to express my deep concern and compassion for all those whose lives have been directly affected by this painful situation. I assure them that the Archdiocese will do all in its power to provide them with pastoral care in the days ahead. At the same time, we wish to create a new atmosphere based on education and dialogue. . . .*

With the parish in an uproar, Chancellor Thomas announced that McGreal would be moved. Emotions surged through a parish meeting. Kramis apologized. "Confidentiality was never intended to protect offenders from the consequences of their acts," declared one man. "Why do we have to send him away?" a woman tearfully cried. "I cannot see any reason . . . to turn our backs on Father Jim!"

That July, after McGreal's departure to a ministerial retirement center, Maryalyce, Adele, and Maryalyce's father went to the chancery in hopes of achieving a sense of reconciliation with Hunthausen and Thomas. Adele continues: "Her father tried to explain his pain in trying to come to grips with his sons, calling Hunthausen 'Excellency,' groping to express himself. Hunthausen folded his arms over his chest and said, 'What do you want me to do about it?' I could have cried. This man is known for compassion and belief in world peace. When Maryalyce started talking about victims, there was no response. I said the archbishop should write a letter to be read at the pulpits apologizing to the victims. Hunthausen said, 'I have nothing to apologize for and will not write such a letter.'"

Hunthausen did, however, order all priests and archdiocesan staffers to attend a daylong workshop on child abuse by the Rev. Marie Fortune, a Universalist minister-therapist, and director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle. Moreover, the archdiocesan treatment program for offenders, under therapists Sister Ferder and Father John Heagle, became a model of its kind.

Says a knowledgeable insurance source: "Seattle did not have many lawsuits



because their archbishop had the guts to do the right thing." The greater courage lay in Maryalyce Ebert Stamatiou and Adele Doran, whose bittersweet victory came in a climate of public opinion Jeanne Miller helped foster. In pressing reform on the church, the three women shared a profound common denominator: collectively, they had brought fourteen children into the world.

## ii.

Back in Chicago, Jeanne Miller continued to gather information on pedophilia cases, which she was sharing with a couple identified in court papers as John and Jane Doe.\* Their seven-year-old son was the central figure in a lawsuit against the archdiocese, charging that a suburban pastor had molested and beaten the boy in concert with the school principal, a former nun. Of the many lawsuits I followed, this was like no other. John and Jane Doe were using litigation to force Cardinal Bernardin to change the way the archdiocese handled child molesting priests.

You might say that nothing in the Does' lives prepared them for the haunting story of their son, and the way the church and legal system responded to the shocking charges the Does forced them to confront; then again, everything the Catholic faith taught the Does, every lesson in morality, had shaped them for the ordeal.

"It was a very simple life, and a good life that we had," John Doe reflected as we followed the Adlai Stevenson Expressway into the glinting sun of a February afternoon. "South Side Irish in this city have always been a different breed: you took your identity from your neighborhood, parish, and school."

He had buddies who had stayed in the old neighborhood, but Doe wore a fine dark suit and his home in the suburbs was a world removed from the Chicago his forebears found three generations ago. He was an attorney, with a guarded quality to his speech, as if to keep memories of the recent past at bay: "My mother and father grew up next door to each other. In the Depression, I've been told, when people didn't know what they were gonna eat, neighbor would help neighbor with a slab of bacon, a piece of this, a piece of that. My mother took care of four older people in two next-door houses. Nobody got medals for it. That was the way people lived. I'm the first in my family to finish high school. I bought my mother a house a few years ago, but she spends a good deal of time at our place."

We drove past row upon row of trim bungalows. As darkened brick and medieval spires of churches emerged and receded, Doe grew animated. "The guys who really ran things, the figures you looked up to, were the old monsignors. Just about every parish in the 1950s had the man who came out thirty years earlier when it was nothing but farmland and he built the church and built the school and was himself a cornerstone of the neighborhood.

"People would say, 'That's Father Green, he built St. Rita's. . . . There goes Monsignor Hishen, he built St. Gall.' A guy who built one of those parishes could have built a factory, could have practiced law or been a doctor. These guys had dough; they knew everybody, they were named in people's wills. So the first