

The Grand Jury finds that the Intervention Team ignored advice and recommendations from Church selected psychiatric experts, they failed to notify pastors of problems with priests in their parishes, and they never told parishioners of a priest's abusive past. They did this to avoid scandal, publicity and legal liability for the Diocese and in careless disregard for the welfare and safety of children. When asked in the grand jury why parishioners were not told about sexually abusive priests, a high-ranking member of the Diocese explained that, " he [the priest] would not have been given a chance to even begin to minister there because the people would have said we don't want him here" Among other things, this institutional protection for offender priests effectively resulted in parents being unable to fulfill their religious responsibilities to their children under the Roman Catholic Catechism.⁸¹ In contravention of its own teaching, Diocesan policy put children at risk.

Diocesan officials frequently ignored the advice of the professionals they hired to evaluate priests accused of sexually abusing children. For example, *Priest S*, a sexually abusive priest who has not heretofore been described, was accused of fondling and raping four teenaged girls in his parish. (Grand Jury Exhibit 32D) After residential treatment both the facility and the Diocesan priest who was acting as a support person for *Priest S*, and who happened also to be a medical doctor specializing in psychiatry, both recommended that he not be returned to his parish. (Grand Jury Exhibits 32G, 32J) For some unexplainable reason the Diocese disregarded this advice and returned *Priest S* to his parish. This parish had an elementary school attached to it. Subsequent to this, additional allegations of sexual abuse were brought to the attention of the Diocese. Without further evaluation or treatment *Priest S* was simply reassigned, to another

⁸¹ The Catechism is a compilation of the basic teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

parish with a school. A member of the intervention team testified before the Grand Jury that this was not the right thing to do. There was no question as to the veracity of these allegations. Notes from a high-ranking Diocesan official indicate that the report of at least one of the victims had, “internal consistency”. This priest also noted that the potential for litigation and publicity in the case was “some” since an attorney was involved and the victim had a large family with close ties to the parish. (Grand Jury Exhibit 32J) The victims had all been severely traumatized by their abuse, one had attempted suicide and the others dealt regularly with depression and anger. They were also frustrated with the Diocesan response to their situation. Many telephone calls to members of the intervention team had not been returned. Moreover, *Priest S* despite treatment, had not accepted responsibility for his actions. He was described as being in denial and minimizing the incidents, claiming they were “kind of consensual”. (Grand Jury Exhibit 32I) *Priest S* had been the pastor to one of the members of the Intervention Team. Whether this had any impact on the Diocese’s decision is unknown. However, the Grand Jury is at a loss to find any other explanation for the inexcusable actions of the Diocese in this case.

The formal written policy promulgated in 1992 also required that, in cases involving the sexual abuse of a minor, the priest involved would be sent to a non-church related facility for evaluation. This requirement was almost always ignored. Most of the priests from the Diocese were sent to church related psychiatric facilities. The grand jury received no adequate