

# **Myths & Truths:**

## **A Critical Analysis of Top 8 Storylines Promoted by Catholic Church Leadership in Their Lobbying Efforts to Defeat the Child Victim's Act of New York (A2596).**

**A Special Report Issued By**

**The Zalkin Law Firm**  
**[www.nyclergyabuse.com](http://www.nyclergyabuse.com)**

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**Myths & Truths:  
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**Summary**

Using a research-based methodology and applying a common sense review of the historical record, this rigorously cited report finds that the Catholic Church hides behind contrived, disingenuous storylines in an attempt to Defeat the Child Victim's Act of New York (A2596).

Together with commentary from Irwin Zalkin, a leading sexual abuse attorney who has negotiated more than \$200 million in clergy abuse settlements nationwide, and the managing partner of The Zalkin Law Firm, the report examines Church leaderships' eight (8) most frequently used storylines and provides detailed, cited evidence of their illegitimacy:

- Storyline #1:** "We did not know then what we know today."  
**Storyline #2:** "It is not fair to hold Bishops of today accountable for the behavior of others."  
**Storyline #3:** "We're going to go bankrupt!"  
**Storyline #4:** "We will no longer be able to carry on charitable works!"  
**Storyline #5:** "We will have to close schools and sell churches."  
**Storyline #6:** "These revival statutes are targeted to the Catholic Church; it's unfair not to include public schools that are or were just as bad."  
**Storyline #7:** "This is all about greedy trial lawyers who have made millions."  
**Storyline #8:** "We have addressed the problem."

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #1:** “We did not know then what we know today.”

**Zalkin:** “If by ‘then’ they mean the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, then I would agree. However, Roman Catholic institutions have documentation of clergy abuse dating back as far as the 8<sup>th</sup> Century!”

**Analysis:** While the sexual abuse of children by clergy was unknown by the vast majority of Catholics and the general public, the same cannot be said of the ordained men who have led Catholic Corporations. For centuries, the leaders of Roman Catholic Institutions have been aware that their clerics have a propensity to sexually abuse children. The Church is desperately attempting to hide the truth when it opposes the amendment of statute of limitations that would empower the civil justice system to review the historical record. Consider:

- As far back as the 8<sup>th</sup> Century documents regarding the sacrament of penance contained specific guidance for the punishment of clerics who engaged in sodomy with young boys.<sup>1</sup>
- The Vatican has long recognized that priests misuse their office to extract sex from others. Papal laws were promulgated in 1561, 1622, 1741, 1917, 1922, 1962, 1983 and 2001 to investigate and punish priests who use the sacrament of penance, the power of the confessional to extract sex.<sup>2</sup>
- The 1962 Papal document provides that “the worst crime” involves sexual conduct with a member of the same sex, children or brute animals.<sup>3</sup>
- The 1917 Code of Canon Law, that was controlling upon the Roman Catholic Dioceses throughout the world, lists the sexual abuse of minors as a crime within the church.<sup>4</sup>
- The 1983 Revised Code of Canon Law contains a similar prohibition.<sup>5</sup> Both the 1917 and 1983 codes contain specific procedures to be followed when investigating allegations of sexual abuse of minors.<sup>6</sup>

The internal recognition of this problem was further exemplified by the establishment of a special Roman Catholic community in the United States in 1946—the Servants of the Paraclete.<sup>7</sup> The Paracletes treated priests with addiction, psychological, psycho-sexual problems, including priests who sexually

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<sup>1</sup> *The Penitential of Bede* (England, 8th century).

<sup>2</sup> Doyle, Sipe, Wall, *Sex, Priests, and Secrete Codes* 37 – 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Crimen Sollicitationis*, Promulgated on March 16, 1962.

<sup>4</sup> In the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* the prohibition is found at Canon 2359 and in the Revised 1983 *Code of Canon Law* the prohibition is found at Canon 1395.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> In the current code this procedure is known as The Preliminary Investigation, and can be found at Canons 1717-19.

<sup>7</sup> Doyle, Sipe, Wall, *Sex, Priests, and Secrete Codes*, 54,71,210,301-05; Web site of National Catholic Reporter at: <http://ncronline.org/documents/fitzgerald.pdf> .

abused children.<sup>8</sup> Documents obtained through litigation have exposed the fact that the founder of the Paracletes, Father Gerald Fitzgerald, understood that men who abused children could not be cured and therefore should not be allowed to function as priests.<sup>9</sup> He believed that such men should be removed from the priesthood, and shared his experience and knowledge with Bishops across America as well as in reports to the Vatican and directly to the Pope.<sup>10</sup> Following the establishment of the Paracletes in 1946, centers were established across North America that provided treatment for pedophile and ephebophile priests.

While much of what the Roman Catholic Church knew priest misconduct with children was held in secret, recent litigation has exposed panel discussions and reports on the issue in the United States occurring from the early 1960s through the 1980s. The most famous report was written in 1985. Entitled “*The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy: Meeting the Problem in a Comprehensive and Responsible Manner*” it was disclosed at that year’s U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference. In the report, the authors indicated that if no reforms were taken, the Roman Catholic Church in America could be held responsible for causing a billion dollars worth of damages.

Sadly, it took the American Bishops nearly 17 years, and then only after the public revelation in 2002 of secret documents in Boston, to take any type of meaningful corrective action.

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<sup>8</sup> Id.

<sup>9</sup> Id. Early Alarm for Church on Abusers in the Clergy, Laurie Goodstein, The New York Times – April 2, 2009, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/us/03church.html?\\_r=2&ref=us](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/us/03church.html?_r=2&ref=us); Judge Orders Records of Priests Accused of Molestation Released, Victoria Kim, The Los Angeles Times – April 3, 2009, at <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-franciscans3-2009apr03.0.7780486.story>.

<sup>10</sup> Id.

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #2:** “It is not fair to hold Bishops of today accountable for the behavior of others.”

**Zalkin:** “No other corporation or organization in this country is absolved from accountability simply because there has been a change in the executive office. This is no different.”

**Analysis:** It is right to hold Roman Catholic Corporations, which as a matter of corporate policy provided known and credibly suspected pedophiles and ephebophiles with access to children, responsible for the damage they have caused. No other corporation is absolved from accountability simply because there has been a change in the executive office. For too long it has been left for to the survivors of abuse, their families, their employers, and society at large to pay for the cost of the horrors these corporations allowed.

In July of 2002, the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in America gathered in Dallas and launched a public relations campaign to respond to the disclosure of secret documents in Boston. The documents evidenced a wide raging scandal of abuse of children within the church. Bishop Wilton Gregory, then President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, gave a speech on July 13, 2002 in which he admitted:

“The Penance that is necessary here is not the obligation of the Church at large in the United States, but the responsibility of the Bishops ourselves. Both “what we have done” and “what we have failed to do” contributed to the sexual abuse of children and young people by clergy and Church personnel. Moreover, our God-given duty as shepherds of the Lord’s people holds us responsible and accountable to God and to the Church for the spiritual and moral health of all of God’s children, especially those who are weak and most vulnerable. It is we who need to confess; and so we do.

- We are the ones, whether through ignorance or lack of vigilance, or – God forbid – with knowledge, who allowed priest abusers to remain in ministry and reassigned them to communities where they continued to abuse.
- We are the ones who chose not to report the criminal actions of priests to the authorities, because the law did not require this.
- We are the ones who worried more about the possibility of scandal than in bringing about the kind of openness that helps prevent abuse.

- And we are the ones who, at times, responded to victims and their families as adversaries and not as suffering members of the Church.”<sup>11</sup>

The same day that Bishop Gregory made the public confession of culpability, the *Dallas Morning News* published a report indicating that 2/3 (111 of 178) of the nation's Roman Catholic Diocese were being led by men who allowed accused pedophile and ephebophiles to continue in church ministry.<sup>12</sup>

The Roman Catholic Bishops in America have appointed a national panel of laymen to assist them in preventing acts of childhood sexual abuse in the “Post-Boston” era. The first two individuals to head that panel report very troubling circumstances with the current hierarchy. Frank Keating, the former Oklahoma governor, resigned as the first chairman and berated the Bishops for refusing to disclose information about priest offenders. The Governor compared the post-Boston Bishops to ‘La Cosa Nostra’ for their devotion to secrecy.<sup>13</sup> The second chair, Justice Ann Burke, stated that the Bishops had manipulated the review board.<sup>14</sup> She held special comment for the resistance of Archbishop Egan of New York to meaningful investigation stating that: “Cardinal Edward Egan was offended by our insistence for independence,”<sup>15</sup> “I also think he was intimidated by the thoughts of fifty former FBI agents doing our questioning. His animosity reached an absurd level when he publicly uninvited us from attending the Cardinal’s Annual Gala in New York.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Presidential Address -- Bishop Wilton D. Gregory

Dallas, Texas -- June 13, 2002, at: <http://www.usccb.org/bishops/presidentialaddress.shtml> .

<sup>12</sup> 2/3 Of Us Bishops Let Accused Priests Continue To Work, Brooks Egerton and Reese Dunklin, *Dallas Morning News* - June. 13, 2002; now at <http://www.bishop-accountability.org/resources/resource-files/databases/DallasMorningNewsBishops.htm> .

<sup>13</sup> Keating to Quit Board on Sex Abuse, Stands by His Criticism of Some Bishops' Secrecy, Michael Paulson, *Boston Globe* – June 16, 2003; now at: [http://www.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/stories4/061603\\_keating.htm](http://www.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/stories4/061603_keating.htm) .

<sup>14</sup> Head of Bishops' Panel Criticizes Clerics, Michael Paulson , *Boston Globe* - September 8, 2008; now at [http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2008/09/08/head\\_of\\_bishops\\_panel\\_criticizes\\_clerics/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2008/09/08/head_of_bishops_panel_criticizes_clerics/) .

<sup>15</sup> Id.

<sup>16</sup> Id.

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #3:** “We’re going to go bankrupt.”

**Zalkin:** “This is the one the Church uses all the time -- and it's completely untrue. When the Diocese of San Diego filed for bankruptcy the Judge called their petition ‘disingenuous’ and ‘a method to hammer down the claims of the abused’ before dismissing it.”

**Analysis:** From a moral perspective, the Roman Catholic Corporations in America are already bankrupt, and that is what has lead to the sexual abuse of children on a mass scale. That moral bankruptcy continues to be evidenced by the cries of the Bishops, and their public relations professionals, who claim that it is too expensive to hold Catholic Corporations responsible for their longstanding polices to provide sexual abusers with access to children. By-and-large, these cries are designed to:

- prevent meaningful inquiry by the civil justice system into Church conduct
- protect the assets of insurance companies, and
- preserve the local church’s role as a Land Barron that holds title to property (parking lots, apartment buildings, vacant property, etc) that has nothing to do with ministry.

Before anyone adopts the cries of the Bishops as their own, careful consideration should be given to the insights of the most recent federal bankruptcy judge to weigh such assertions. Upon dismissing the bankruptcy petition of the Diocese of San Diego in 2007, Judge Louise DeCarl Adler of the United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of California, stated the following from the bench:

“I decided this morning to reacquaint myself with the exact definition of ‘disingenuous.’ According to Merriam Webster’s it means lacking in candor, also giving a false appearance of simple frankness, calculating. From what I understand of the diocese finances, having spent hours reading Mr. Neilson’s [an independent expert appointed by Judge Adler] report and studying the four versions of the diocese scheduled assets, I think the term ‘disingenuous’ as applied to the diocese description of assets available to fund the settlement is completely accurate. There is, in my view, ample other property available for liquidation to fund this settlement without threatening the mission of the church. It is simply a question of how the diocese sets its priorities.

I say this because this case has ramifications beyond San Diego. There may be other diocese in this country which may be considering Chapter 11 as an easy vehicle to deal with the claims

of abuse victims. I think that would be a mistake now or in the future. The church needs to look within itself. It needs to ask itself whether its core mission to educate children, to tend to the spiritual needs of its community, and to bring some healing to those abuse victims requires it to retain nonessential assets such as parking lots, apartment buildings, houses bequeathed to it, parish churches no longer viable, vacant land. As I understand what occurred in Boston, a diocese that did not file Chapter 11, this is precisely what was done there. Before a diocese -- any diocese -- resorts to a Chapter 11 filing, it should be making a good faith honest effort to assess whether that is necessary.

Chapter 11 is not supposed to be a vehicle or a method to hammer down the claims of the abused. It is a method of dealing with those claims fairly while preserving the core business, if you will, of the Chapter 11 debtor. That's why dismissing this case is appropriate.

This settlement deals fairly with the victims' claims, and yet the core business of the church and this diocese can be preserved and accommodate the payment of those claims from nonessential assets without requiring the assistance of the bankruptcy court. In light of what I now know, it always could have.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> IN THE MATTER OF: THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF SAN DIEGO, CASE NO. 07-00939-LA, REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2007, 74:8- 76:16.

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #4:** “We will not be able to continue charitable works.”

**Zalkin:** “The Catholic Church is cutting costs because of the economy and its strain on operating budgets generally. When it comes to litigation, it’s their insurance providers who have the most to lose.”

**Analysis:** Providing justice to survivors of childhood sexual abuse does not bring a halt to the ability of Roman Catholic Corporations to perform “good works.” What is most at risk are the funds of insurance companies and assets that have nothing to do with social ministry.

Most of the financing of the good works of the Roman Catholic Church in America is marshaled through big business tactics and lobbying of national, state, and local government in the extreme. It comes as a surprise to most in America that government grants are the largest source of funding for the advocacy and direct services organized and delivered through various entities under the banner of Catholic Charities. Across this nation, more than 1,700 agencies and institutions, involving thousands of programs, over 62,000 staff, and more than 240,000 volunteers, make up the Catholic Charities network.<sup>18</sup> The largest percentage of the budgets of these entities comes not from parishioners in the pew, but rather from government financing in the form of grants that do not have to be repaid.<sup>19</sup> The last Bishop to answer questions under oath regarding the relationship between government grants and charitable activity in his diocese was Bishop Robert Brom of San Diego. Brom conceded that at least 75% of the charitable budget came from government grants. These government grants are not at risk when survivors of sexual abuse are treated justly. As the Diocese of Albany admits: Catholic Charities money is not used to settle victims’ claims.<sup>20</sup>

At risk when the Bishops fail to provide justice for survivors of sexual abuse is the moral standing and voice that they have always enjoyed. It is beyond hypocritical for the Bishops to shout out the injustices of other human intuitions when their own corporations fail to provide a remedy for the egregious damage they have caused. This course of conduct is likely to reduce the numbers of those willing to volunteer to advocate and deliver services in the Bishops’ name.

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<sup>18</sup> Ten Ways Catholic Charities are Catholic at:

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/Page.aspx?pid=296> .

<sup>19</sup> The U.S. Catholic Church: How It Works, Business Week – April 15, 2007; at:

[http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/02\\_15/b3778004.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/02_15/b3778004.htm) .

<sup>20</sup> Frequently Asked Questions & Answers about Sexual Abuse, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, at: <http://www.rcda.org/policy/PDF/Q&AABOUTSEXUALABUDEFFormatForIT.pdf> .

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #5:** “We will have to close schools and sell churches.”

**Zalkin:** “This is #4 in a different wrapper. Some Catholic schools are closing, but that has everything to do with demographics and the economy and nothing to do with litigation.”

**Analysis:** The viability of Catholic schools has been in a steep decline for many years. Many Catholic schools have closed in recent years, and more will undoubtedly close in the years to come, but not because of any revival legislation that temporarily lifts the statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse actions.

A recent article notes that “New York’s Catholic schools have been hit by the same crippling economic and demographic shifts that have afflicted urban Catholic education all over the country. First, starting in the 1960s, the formerly poor Irish and Italian families who owed their economic success to no-nonsense, traditional Catholic education began moving out of the cities and into the suburbs, and became less inclined to send their kids to parish schools or to support the schools they left behind. Second, the teaching nuns who once supplied free instructional services in the classrooms became a vanishing breed and were replaced by lay faculty, who eventually organized into unions and demanded higher salaries. Third, many of the new black and Hispanic families who would surely send their children to fill the Catholic school seats vacated by white ethnics are less and less able to afford the higher tuition payments necessitated by the schools’ rising costs.”<sup>21</sup>

An additional obstacle facing New York’s Catholic schools is the re-emergence of New York City’s public schools as outstanding educational options. Funding to public schools has increased dramatically in recent years which has resulted in drastically increased performance of the public schools. With public schools providing solid educational options, the attractiveness of Catholic schools to poorer families, which generally require tuition payments, has diminished significantly.<sup>22</sup>

These factors have resulted in Catholic school closures, are not related to the sexual abuse of children, and will persist whether a revival period is passed by the Legislature, or not.

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<sup>21</sup> Catholic-School Closing Tragedy, CITY JOURNAL – February 13, 2009; review of *The Street Stops Here: A Year at a Catholic High School in Harlem*, by Patrick J. McCloskey (University of California Press, 456 pp., \$27.50), at <http://www.city-journal.org/2009/bc0213ss.html> .

<sup>22</sup> Id.

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #6:** “These revival statutes are targeted to Catholic Church. It’s unfair not to include public schools that are or were just as bad.”

**Zalkin:** “As the largest perpetrator of sexual abuse of children, it may very well feel like they are being singled out, but the bill currently pending in the New York State Legislature would revive claims against any privately operated institution that harbored child abusers.”

**Analysis:** Statutes that revive previously time-barred claims relating to childhood sexual abuse do not target the Catholic Church. The Bill currently pending in the New York State Legislature would revive claims against not only Roman Catholic entities, but would also allow any privately operated institution that harbored child abusers to be held accountable for that conduct. Rather than targeting any particular religious institutions, the revival provision currently being considered by the Legislature would treat all religious institutions evenly, and in the same manner as non-religious organizations and secular private schools.

This line of argument also misses the fact that revival windows allow survivors of childhood sexual abuse to seek justice against their actual abuser, against whom the statute of limitations will—in many cases—have expired. Catholic institutions, therefore, may ultimately form a minority of all defendants named in revived actions.

In a recent response to this line of argument, New York State Senator Eric T. Schneiderman, who heads the Senate Codes Committee, noted that “Just because it does not broaden the rights of victims 100 percent does not mean we should not try to broaden their rights somewhat.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Religious Leaders Battle Abuse Bill in New York, Paul Vitello, The New York Times, N.Y./Region – March 11, 2009, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/12/nyregion/12abuse.html?\\_r=2&pagewanted=1&ref=nyregion](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/12/nyregion/12abuse.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&ref=nyregion)

## Myths & Truths

**Storyline #7:** “This all about greedy trial lawyers who have made millions.”

**Zalkin:** “They like to say that but it’s really about righting a wrong. The record is clear, the civil justice system, with its rules of discovery and the ability to hold public hearings and trials, routinely exposes the historical fact that the Church knew for decades upon decades that its children were being abused by priests. Civil litigation is the only recourse victims have for vindication and rehabilitation.

“That is why they challenge legislation that would empower review by the civil justice system, and try to cutoff trials by running to bankruptcy court. The record is overwhelming and litigation reveals more damage and culpability by the hierarchy that had been unknown by the public.”

**Analysis:** Senator Thomas Duane, who has sponsored the currently-pending bill in the Senate, notes that opening the statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse victims is “about giving people the right to seek justice.”<sup>24</sup> For most survivors, there is no recourse through the criminal justice system. By the time most survivors of childhood sexual abuse are able to understand the devastating affects the abuse has had upon them, the time to begin a criminal prosecution of the abuser has expired, and it cannot be reopened. As a result, many perpetrators are immune from criminal prosecution.

Thus, the only recourse available to a survivor is through the civil justice system, where the survivor becomes empowered and can seek personal vindication and hold responsible people or entities accountable for the abuse. The civil justice system has proven effective in forcing out the truth in the historical record. The truth, that from the office of the Pope, through the halls of the Vatican, and down to the local dioceses the hierarchy knew that the children of the Roman Catholic Church in America were being abused by priests.<sup>25</sup>

The civil justice system also provides a forum by which survivors can raise awareness of past sexual abuse and cover-up. Through increased awareness it can ensure that children are not similarly abused in the future. Without revival legislation, even this avenue is usually unavailable to survivors of childhood sexual abuse, which perpetuates the victimization of the survivors and shifts the stifling costs of the abuse away from responsible people and institutions and toward the survivors and the public at large.

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<sup>24</sup> Id.

<sup>25</sup> Early Alarm for Church on Abusers in the Clergy, Laurie Goodstein, The New York Times – April 2, 2009, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/us/03church.html?\\_r=2&ref=us](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/us/03church.html?_r=2&ref=us); Judge Orders Records of Priests Accused of Molestation Released, Victoria Kim, The Los Angeles Times – April 3, 2009, at <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-franciscans3-2009apr03.0.7780486.story>.

The emotional and psychological damage that results from childhood sexual abuse are felt by the public at large. Many survivors experience life-long problems with drug and alcohol abuse which require state funded treatment programs. Survivors of abuse often experience difficulty in maintaining employment, resulting in reliance on state unemployment or disability programs. A large number of survivors require state funded therapy or other medical care. Employers are affected by frequent missed work days by survivors dealing with the after-effects of childhood sexual abuse.

Under the present statute of limitations, it is the survivors themselves, their employers, their families and the public that currently bear the financial burden of the sexual abuse while responsible entities are free from potential liability. A change in the statute of limitations would shift the burden for paying for the horrific harm suffered by survivors of childhood sexual abuse away from the survivors and the State, and toward the responsible institutions who could have stopped sexual abuse but instead stood idly by, or worse, participated in a cover-up and protected known abusers.

Revival legislation is not about money, or attorneys, but rather about allowing individuals who have been victimized for too long to seek justice, to stop a pattern of abuse from continuing, and to shift the financial burden of the sexual abuse away from the victims and the State, and to the people and entities that are responsible for the abuse.

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**Storyline #8** “We have addressed the problem.”

**Zalkin:** “Interesting, because the US Conference of Catholic Bishops just published a report saying that claims of clergy abuse were on the rise.”<sup>26</sup>

**Analysis:** While the various Dioceses of New York claim to have addressed the problem of priests sexually abusing children, they will not make their files available to the public, or openly identify the priests from within their organizations that have been accused or suspected of abuse.

In 2002, when California enacted a law similar to the one currently contemplated by the New York State Legislature that revived previously time-barred claims for childhood sexual abuse for a one-year period, the various California Dioceses also argued that they had addressed the problem of the children being abused by clerics. While the Dioceses claimed to have corrected their past practices and removed known abusers from their ranks, when victims were finally allowed to seek justice, many abusers still in active ministry, some with numerous victims, were identified and finally removed.

Finally, this argument ignores the facts that the statute of limitations will not be lifted only against Roman Catholic entities. Previously time-barred claims against actual abusers will be revived, as will claims against non-Catholic religious institutions, secular private schools and non-religious youth organizations. That Roman Catholic entities claim to have addressed this problem does not obviate the need for revival legislation to permit victims of childhood sexual abuse to seek justice for the harm they have suffered.

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<sup>26</sup> Catholic Bishops: Clergy abuse claims rose in 2008, Rachel Zoll  
AP Religion Writer -- March 13, 2009, at:  
[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/03/13/ap\\_newsbreak\\_clergy\\_abuse\\_claims\\_rose\\_last\\_year/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/03/13/ap_newsbreak_clergy_abuse_claims_rose_last_year/) : 2008 Annual Report, The Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, at <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/index.shtml> .

## Myths & Truths

### About Irwin Zalkin

Irwin M. Zalkin is a Martindale-Hubbell (national directory of attorneys) AV rated litigator which is the highest rating a lawyer can receive from fellow attorneys and judges. He has been a trial lawyer for twenty nine years handling cases all over the United States and internationally. He has received numerous multi-million dollar jury verdicts and settlements for his clients.

Mr. Zalkin graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.) with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science in 1976 and received his Juris Doctorate degree from California Western School of Law in San Diego in 1979.

While at California Western School of Law, he was a recipient of the American Board of Trial Advocates Trial Attorney's Award for Moot Court, and was a candidate for the prestigious International Law Journal. Mr. Zalkin was admitted to the California Bar in 1979. Additional distinctions include:

- 2008 Trial Lawyer of the Year Finalist, Public Justice Foundation, Washington D.C.
- 2008 Semi-Finalist Top Attorney of the Year, San Diego Daily Transcript
- 2008 San Diego Top Attorney Corporate Litigation

Mr. Zalkin has developed an expertise in applying legal strategy to complex medical issues in serious brain, spinal cord and amputee personal injury cases. He is a tenacious litigator, managing difficult cases over periods of years necessary to reach an acceptable resolution for his clients. Mr. Zalkin is also an extraordinary negotiator, recognizing that his clients' interests are often best served by negotiations outside the courtroom.

In addition to numerous courtroom victories, Mr. Zalkin is credited with receiving several published court opinions, including *Snell v. Bell Helicopter Textron*, *Smith v. National Steel & Shipbuilding Company* and *Rebelo v. California Home Brands, Inc.*

## Myths & Truths

### **About The Zalkin Law Firm**

The Zalkin Law Firm ([www.nyclergyabuse.com](http://www.nyclergyabuse.com)) is one of the premier sexual abuse and personal injury firms in the country. The experienced sexual abuse and personal injury lawyers at the Zalkin Law Firm have achieved groundbreaking verdicts in high-profile clergy abuse cases, personal injury cases against large corporation, medical malpractice cases and countless other sexual abuse and personal injury cases across the United States.

The Zalkin Law Firm works with only the finest and most qualified sexual abuse and personal injury attorneys. Lawyers with a dedication to upholding your and your family's rights no matter what the issue.

Founding attorney Irwin Zalkin is an AV-rated lawyer, the highest possible attorney rating which is voted on by fellow attorneys & judges. Each attorney at the Zalkin Law Firm is fully dedicated to upholding the rights of victims across the country. You have legal rights in cases where you have been harmed or damaged in any way, and the personal injury and sexual abuse lawyers at The Zalkin Law Firm have the years of experience necessary to help you through these types of cases with the confident and aggressive representation that you deserve.

### **Specialization in Clergy Abuse and Personal Injury Cases**

If you or a loved one has been a victim of clergy abuse, sexual abuse, personal injury, medical malpractice or cerebral palsy, the qualified attorneys at the Zalkin Law Firm can help you. Among the honors and additional training achieved by various lawyers at the Zalkin Law Firm are:

- AV-rated (highest achievable Martindale-Hubbell rating)
- American Board of Trial Advocates Trial Attorney's Award for Moot Court
- Medi-Legal Institute Graduate
- Whittier Moot Court Honors Board Excellence in Appellate Advocacy Award
- 2008 San Diego Top Attorney Corporate Litigation

The attorneys at the Zalkin Law Firm have also published articles, chaired committees and worked with countless individuals to better their field and make progress in the field of defending survivors of sexual abuse and personal injury.

## Myths & Truths

### Contact Us

Mr. Zalkin is available to speak to the media about clergy sexual abuse, the USCCB report, and the Child Victim's Act of New York (A. 4560-B).

Please contact Lisa Maynes (212-889-1300; lisam@zalkin.com) to arrange interviews.

To speak to Mr. Zalkin about legal representation, please call The Zalkin Law Firm (212-889-1300).

The firm may also be contacted through its websites ([www.zalkin.com](http://www.zalkin.com) & [www.nyclergyabuse.com](http://www.nyclergyabuse.com)), which contain an enormous amount of additional information and resources for victims of sexual abuse: