

Beat: News

How Priests are Able to Abuse

We are taught not to question

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USPA NEWS - We teach our children to run away from uncomfortable situations, but we are also telling them to respect authority. They need to know it is okay to question what we say.

About a decade ago, a woman came in the newspaper office where I was working. This was during a time when there was another incident in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, about a Priest abusing children. She came in just to renew her subscription, but for some reason she made the statement that she did not understand how the secrets of such abuse can be quiet for so many years, and how it can even happen in the first place. Children are warned about predators, taught to say "no" [2], and to run from situations like that. Most importantly, they are to tell their parents or guardians if anyone should touch them inappropriately. I responded to her. I told her that I was born, baptized, and raised Catholic, and I could tell her how it happens.

From the time we were old enough to understand what our mother was telling us, my siblings and I were told to respect our elders and leaders, and that included the leaders of the Church. A few of us went to Catholic school up until eighth grade, where teachers were made up of lay people, Nuns and Priests. When it came to be instructed by the ordained, it was pounded into our heads that they were representatives of God, and not to question what they say. That can pretty much sum up why it easy for Catholic children to be abused, but there is always more. It can apply to all children and not just ones who are raised in a religious family. We are taught from an early age not to question authority. That could be parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, police officers, and teachers. You see where I am going with this? We are confusing our children.

What we should be teaching our young people is that it is okay to question. They should question their teachers, Priests, Nuns, and family. More importantly, they should be taught to talk to others about situations that make them feel uncomfortable. After I came across some books penned by Anthony DeMello, it opened my eyes to a new way of thinking. DeMello was a Jesuit Priest and psychotherapist. He let his followers know that it was okay to question our authority figures, because they are sometimes wrong. Our parents can be wrong. Our teachers can be wrong. Then, of course, our church leaders can be wrong. No one is perfect, even those that teach us. Religion can sometimes overtake peoples' lives. We need to remember what too much of a good thing can do to us. In small amounts it is alright, but immersing ourselves into anything that we allow to run our lives, is giving them control. We need to stay in control, for us and our children.

This is only my opinion as a Catholic. I welcome debate.

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