



NARRATION FOR CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE OF ADULTS VIDEO

Slide 1 – No audio

Slide 2 – It can happen to anyone

Clergy sexual abuse can happen to anyone.

The horrific abuse of children by clergy is well-known.

It also happens to adults, resulting in serious harm to the victims and their families.

Slide 3 – Perpetrators can be anyone

Abusive clergy can be:

- Famous or little known
- Unmarried or married
- Men or women
- In any faith community
- One-time or serial abusers
- And some can themselves be victims of sexual abuse

Slide 4 – How do clergy abuse adults?

Much is known about abuse of children, but how do clergy abuse women and men?

Slide 5 – Sneak Attack

Abusive clergy, finding themselves alone with an adult, might grope, kiss, fondle, or rape the victim out-of-the-blue.

Slide 6 – “Trust me.” But is this person trustworthy?

Others use emotional, psychological, or spiritual manipulation to sexualize pastoral relationships with adults. This is called grooming.

Slide 7 - Where sexual abuse of adults takes place

This could happen during counselling or spiritual direction sessions, or in some other setting of trust, for example, while hearing someone’s confession.

Slide 8 - A few examples of grooming techniques

Abusive clergy might, for example, play on the compassion of their targets or tell their targets about how ‘special’ they are, or how they are meant to experience a special kind of ‘spiritual love’ together, which is manipulated into a sexual relationship.

Slide 9 – Predatory ‘tools of the trade’

To justify their behaviour, abusive clergy might

- Distort religious texts or
- Compare their relationship with the target to that between holy men and women of their faith tradition.

Slide 10 – It isn't an 'affair' where there is a power imbalance

Clergy don't just abuse their power in spiritual settings.

They might also abuse employees, students, or more junior clergy or religious persons, who may not be able to say 'no' to sexual advances, or to bring a complaint against their abuser.

It isn't a consensual affair where there is a power imbalance.

Slide 11 – Seriously #1

"Oh, come on, this doesn't really happen" might be what you are thinking right now.

Or that it couldn't happen in your community.

Or that you would never be a victim.

Slide 12 – Seriously #2 - DENIAL

Unfortunately, such denial of the possibility of abuse enables abusive clergy to avoid suspicion.

It also further harms adult victims of abuse, as it is a form of victim-blaming.

Slide 13 – Imagine someone you trust completely

Imagine yourself with a clergyperson whom you trust fully. Then imagine this clergyperson groping you. You never would have expected that, or believed it was possible.

Slide 14 – It could happen to you

Well, that's what it was like for other adults who **have** been victimized. They, too, fully trusted their representatives of God and never expected anything but compassionate and competent care from them.

Slide 15 – How do we prevent clergy sexual abuse of adults?

So how do we prevent clergy sexual abuse of adults?

Slide 16 – Add abuse of adults to your safe environment policies and procedures

Be sure to add abuse of adults to your faith community's safe environment policies and procedures.

I have put a sample statement on my website.

Slide 17 – Talk about it

Also, create small faith groups in which skills about speaking sensitively and competently about sexual abuse can be developed.

My book, *Abuse in the Church: Healing the Body of Christ*, provides material for such discussions.

Slide 18 – Provide treatment for potential offenders

Discussions might include providing support to people struggling with sexual addictions while at the same time keeping the community of faith safe.

Slide 19 – Let's work together

Let's work together to build healthy faith communities.

Slide 20 – For some resources

To access the resources I mentioned, please visit my website:

www.angelasheart.ca