



NARRATION FOR SACRAMENTAL DISABILITY AND CANON LAW VIDEO

SLIDE 1 – No Audio

SLIDE 2 – Sacramental disability

Some victims / survivors of clergy sexual abuse are no longer able to participate fully in the spiritual life of the Church.

For example, they may not be able to:

- Receive the Eucharist
- Confess to a priest or
- Enter a church

As a result of their traumatic experiences.

SLIDE 3 -Sources of harm

Some are harmed:

- By the initial abuse by a priest
- Rejection by their faith communities when they reveal their abuse
- By the adversarial proceedings in criminal and civil cases where their credibility is challenged

SLIDE 4 – Possessed or traumatized?

Some are harmed by manipulation of religious symbols and text, for example, by an abuser telling a child “Christ will come down from the cross and kill you if you ever tell anyone what happened.”

SLIDE 5 – Abuse during spiritual counseling

Some are harmed while seeking, for example:

- Spiritual direction
- Marriage, grief, vocational, or other counseling
- Forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation

SLIDE 6 – Condemnation by the faith community

After mustering up the courage to tell their faith communities about their abuse, some are told:

- They are attacking the Church or doing Satan’s work
- That they seduced the priest or that it was a consensual love affair
- That they are only out for money

SLIDE 7 – Credibility attacked by Church lawyers

If they go to court, Church lawyers attack their credibility.

SLIDE 8 – How can Canon Law help?

How can changing Canon Law or applying existing Canon Law help?

Here are some ideas.

SLIDE 9 – Sacrament of Reconciliation / Confession

Canons 844 and 960 deal with situations where it is not possible for a penitent to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- Make it clear that moral impossibility can include psychological issues, for example, due to the trauma of sexual abuse by a priest
- Also, make it known that penitents may receive the sacrament from non-Catholic ministers, should they feel safer in doing so

SLIDE 10 – Create safe spaces

Apply Canon 516 and develop quasi-parishes where everyone in attendance is sensitive to the needs of those abused by priests or provide for their pastoral care in another way.

SLIDE 11 – Alternative Dispute Resolution

Apply Canon 1446.

This canon already urges the faithful to seek out-of-court settlements – let's apply it and use Alternative Dispute Resolution in clergy sexual abuse cases.

SLIDE 12 – Warn the faithful

Canon 1339 allows for priests suspected of abuse to be warned.

Let's add warnings to those potentially harmed by priests.

Slide 13 – Let's work together

Let's work together to build healthy faith communities.

Slide 14 – For some resources

To access some other resources on clergy sexual abuse, please visit my website:

www.angelasheart.ca