



## Sin isn't just for Catholics

Recent reports state that every U.S. Catholic diocese has at least one case of abuse. Apparently sin is as pervasive in the Catholic community as anywhere else!

Protestants cluck their collective tongue at what they conclude is punishment for corruption among Catholic Bishops. But would there be different results if each of their church districts were surveyed for cases of abuse?

We already know the answer. Studies regularly demonstrate that one in four young women and one in five young men are abused before they become adults. It has not yet been demonstrated that participation in a religious community reduces the chances of this happening.

We should not be surprised. A Christian distinctive is the doctrine that we are prone to sin, deviance and rebellion, and that we must throw ourselves on the mercy offered in Jesus if we are ever to overcome them.

Church folk are just as tempted toward greed, deceit, addiction and violence as anyone. All forms of sin, including abuse, are found in Christian communities everywhere. The apostle Paul frequently pointed to his own sinful roots and reminded churches he planted that all forms of iniquity were in their history.

This is where many point out that Christians are not to remain in sin, and that God's power helps us overcome weakness. To that I say amen. But key to overcoming is admitting that we have been there, that the awful possibility of returning is very great, and that the mercy of God remains available even then. Key to making sure sin continues is to live in denial.

Abuse is horrible and should be confronted. But the best confrontation grows from our own repentance and sense of vulnerability.

-mark

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