

# The Rock River Time

The Voice of the Community

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## Statistics and information about sexual abuse of children

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### Definition of child sex abuse

According to the Focus Adolescent Services Web site of [www.focusas.com](http://www.focusas.com), "sexual abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials."

### Statistics of Abuse

- ▶ "Child sexual abuse has been reported between 300,000 to 400,000 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater" ([www.focusas.com/Abuse.html](http://www.focusas.com/Abuse.html)).
- ▶ "Child abuse is the least frequently reported form of abuse (it is estimated that only three in 10 rapes are reported)" ([www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org)).
- ▶ "Forty-nine percent of all sexual assaults against children are committed by persons known either by the child or the child's family—teachers, coaches, physicians, ministers, priests, neighbors, or youth leaders."
- ▶ "One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually assaulted by age 18." (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1990)

The following information is from [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org):

"The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops commissioned a survey of Roman Catholic Church records of abusive clergy, to be completed by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The survey is one component of the Dallas Charter, a plan developed by the bishops in 2002 to respond to allegations of widespread child abuse by priests, and of extensive cover-ups by the church. CNN.com obtained a draft copy of the report and posted a summary on their Web site on Feb. 17, 2004."

Following is some of the data in the report, which covered 1950 to 2002. The results were reported by CNN.com and can be viewed online at [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org).

- ▶ Percentage of bishops who provided information: 97 percent
- ▶ Total number of allegations of sexual abuse of children by priests: 11,000; number

substantiated: 6,700 (61 percent); number unsubstantiated: 1,000 (9.1 percent); number that were not investigated because the allegations were made after the priest's death: 3,300

- ▶ Number of priests who served during the interval: 110,000
- ▶ Number of priests alleged to have abused children: 4,450
- ▶ Percentage of abusive priests: 4 percent
- ▶ Number of priests who are currently serving: 44,000
- ▶ Number of cases of abuse per priest: Most priests were accused of a single event; 1,112 priests (25 percent) had two or three allegations; 578 priests (13 percent) had four to nine allegations; 133 priests (2.9 percent) had 10 or more allegations.
- ▶ Age of the victims: Almost 6 percent were 7 years of age or younger; 16 percent were 8-10 years old; 78 percent were 11 to 17 years old.
- ▶ Factors contributing to the abuse problem, as stated by the report: Failure by the hierarchy to grasp the seriousness of the problem; overemphasis on the need to avoid a scandal; use of unqualified treatment centers; misguided willingness to forgive; and insufficient accountability.
- ▶ A USA Today/Gallup Poll taken during 2002-MAR found that: 72 percent of Roman Catholics say the church leadership has done a bad job dealing with sexual abuse by priests; 74 percent say that the church is more concerned with protecting its own image than with solving the problem.

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