News
Opinion



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This morning, I woke up to a story in The Washington Post, Page 1, above the fold. The headline reads: "300 priests in Pa. accused of abusing children."

Although I had read stories of sex abuse (ad nauseam) for years, this number grabbed me. And so did the geography: I taught in the dioceses of Erie and Pittsburgh for years back in the late 1960s. The school in Erie where I taught was an all-girls Catholic high school. Scarcely a priest was ever seen, except to say Mass about once a week. But the school in Pittsburgh was a high school — with both boys and girls — and it was a parish high school. (Yes, those kinds of institutions existed in the 1960s.)

And so, I was left wondering about the priests I knew then, and about other priests in the Pittsburgh Diocese. If there was any abuse of any kind at the time, I did not know about it.

But I continue to be shocked at such stories: how frequently they appear and the numbers of victims they talk about. And it's important to underline: This story is *only* about Pennsylvania. What about other states across the country? Could similar stories be written about them?

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Right here, where I live, in the Washington Archdiocese, the scandal has come home. Theodore McCarrick, archbishop of Washington from 2001 to 2006, stepped down from the College of Cardinals because he himself was accused of sex abuse.

Now, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the current archbishop of Washington, faces questions about his actions when he was bishop of Pittsburgh. (To be clear, this is a question of what he did as bishop of Pittsburgh to handle the stories of abuse, *not* about his own actions.)

But when will this end? Only God knows, I guess. But it is important that the truth come out.