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## Pope: the Devil behind timing of sex abuse crisis

by John L. Allen Jr.



Priests from around the world gather at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome June 10, part of concluding ceremonies for the Year for Priests. (CNS/Paul Haring)

Since the Catholic sexual abuse crisis erupted a decade ago, there have been numerous attempts to explain its causes, from a lack of fidelity to an over-emphasis on celibacy and clerical privilege. This morning in Rome, Pope Benedict XVI pointed to a deeper unseen force lurking behind the crisis, especially its timing: the Devil.

It's no accident, the pope implied, that precisely as the Catholic church was celebrating a "Year for Priests" in 2009-2010, the sexual abuse crisis once again took on massive global proportions.

"It was to be expected that this new radiance of the priesthood would not be pleasing to the "enemy," Benedict XVI said. "He would have rather preferred to see it disappear, so that God would ultimately be driven out of the world."

The term "the enemy" is a traditional Catholic way of referring to the Devil.

The line drew applause from the crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square for a Mass bringing the "Year for Priests" to a close. The Vatican said that some 15,000 priests from more than 90 countries were on hand for the event.

Read the full report here: **Pope sees the Devil behind timing of sex abuse crisis.**

An earlier report by John Allen is here: **As priests rally to defend pope, pope defends celibacy.**

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