

## Good Questions From Kevin Clarke

Michael Sean Winters | May. 18, 2011 | Distinctly Catholic

[Over at America](#) [1], Kevin Clarke asks why the John Jay Report draws a line in the sand at age ten in defining pedophilia, when the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for the American Psychiatric Association draws the distinction as "pre-pubescent" or "generally age 13 or younger."

I hope the John Jay Report authors can explain their choice of where to draw the line.

It is easier to answer Clarke's second question. For reasons known to him alone, Bill Donohue and a few others have made a lot over the fact that most of the sexual abuse cases are not, they contend, strictly speaking pedophilia but ephebophilia, that is, abusing a teenager rather than a child. I have never seen the value of drawing such a distinction. 11 years old and 14 years old are both too young to be having sex and the idea of a priest, who is at least going to be 26 or older, engaging in sex with anyone under the age of consent strikes me as engaging in pedophilia. And, no matter what you call it, it was wrong. Donohue's attempt to draw his distinction just muddies the waters.

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[1] [http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog\\_id=2&entry\\_id=4230](http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog_id=2&entry_id=4230)