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Major sex abuse uncovered in Joliet, Ill., diocese

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NCR Today

Sex abuse was back on the front page of the *Chicago Tribune* on Thursday with the release of approximately 7,000 documents detailing the extent of the problem in the diocese of Joliet, Ill., which covers suburban and collar counties of Chicago. The documents state that between 1973 and 1988, more than 10 percent of the diocese's priests were credibly charged with abuse. The highest rates, ranging from 11.4 percent to 13.2 percent, occurred in the early and middle 1980s.

Release of the material was due largely to the determination of a boy (now 38) who was sexually abused when making his first confession at the age of 8 in his home parish in Mokena, Ill. His lawyer, Terrence Johnson, said getting the records "was the worst, most abusive process of discovery I've ever seen."

Informed by the *Tribune* that a report was in preparation, Joseph Imesch, Joliet bishop from 1979 to 2006, said, "Sure. Sex and the priests, let's blast it all over the place. Never let it go."

Although several Joliet cases of abuse got major media attention, the diocese escaped the sort of pressure and scrutiny that Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and other larger dioceses received.

Read the whole story here.

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