



## Can I Stay in the Catholic Church?: The Abuse Scandal

*Brian Lennon SJ*

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### **Can I Stay in the Catholic Church?: The Abuse Scandal** Brian Lennon SJ

'Can I stay?' is a question faced by many in the light of the Church's response to child abuse. For Brian Lennon, however, the question comes up not only because of the abuse but also because of the faith struggles with which he has lived for many years. The revelations about abuse brought these to a head. They also focused questions about the institution: why is it so dysfunctional and what can we do about this?

In the book he goes back to the core values of the Church's Founder in the scriptures and also looks at periods in history when Church structures were quite different. Doing this gives hope: if the Church changed in the past it can change in the future.

He addresses directly the way the Church dealt with the abuse by asking why did Church leaders respond as they did? Who was to blame? In what ways, if any, were non-leaders in the Church connected to the crisis? He believes that the influence within Church structures of patriarchal practices, undue deference, lack of accountability and transparency made the appalling response more likely. And this in turn further undermined faith, already difficult because of wider cultural issues.

The Church needs to repent. One sign of this will be structural change.

This will not happen without a great effort by many. Part of that effort will involve deeply divided people within the Church learning how to speak to each other about issues that are currently dealt with in a dialogue of the deaf: issues such as the ordination of women, clerical power, and a monarchical papacy. Lay leadership will be needed for that to happen. So also will a Third Vatican Council.

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## Can I Stay in the Catholic Church?: The Abuse Scandal Brian Lennon SJ Bibliography

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