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## Catholic Church sex scandal enters Wisconsin



by DEREK MONTGOMERY

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The unfolding sexual misconduct scandal in the Roman Catholic Church has spread from Boston across the country and has come to Wisconsin.

The scandal has brought down a bishop, and critics say it has tarnished some of the image the church has fought hard for.

In Wisconsin, a Catholic priest was moved from church to church for six years to shield him from prosecution after he was accused of sexually molesting boys.

Father David Malsch was eventually convicted of child enticement after a mother found pornographic videos in her learning-disabled son's bedroom. The boy told her the tapes were from Malsch, who had a long history of sexual involvement with pubescent males dating back to at least the 1970s.

Malsch has been accused of photographing victims in sexually aggressive positions and attempting to engage in anal intercourse with them.

Thus far, the church has not sought to defrock Malsch, but he has been suspended from practicing priestly duties.

Despite his relocation, Diocese of Superior Bishop Raphael Fliss denied knowing the details of Malsch's offenses. Amidst the scandal, the issue of celibacy and its role in the church is being questioned.

The official paper of the Boston Archdiocese, The Pilot, recently ran an editorial article examining the issue of optional celibacy.

"These questions are out there in the minds of Catholics, more so in the United States than elsewhere. They have been answered in the past, but now these questions have taken on a deeper intensity in more Catholic minds than prior to these sexual scandals," the editorial read. "Even if our present woes in the archdiocese were suddenly to disappear, these questions have taken on an urgency and will not slip quietly away."

The editorial stated American pop culture does not understand celibacy as an expression of love for God.

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people arrested as part of major investigation into child pornography on the internet.

The link between pedophilia and the priesthood is a fairly recent phenomenon, said Lee Palmer Wandel, a professor of history and religious studies at UW-Madison.

“In the 16th century, priests had mistresses or ‘housekeepers.’ Thus far, we have little evidence of pedophilia for the early modern period. And, in the modern period, marriage seems to have no deterrence on pedophilia,” Wandel said.

The Vatican has begun to express concern because the issue has spread outside the United States. Accusations of sexual misconduct in the Catholic Church are appearing in France and Poland.

Madison, on the other hand, has avoided events like those in Boston. William Brophy, director of the Office of Communications for the Madison Diocese, said Madison has been spared the hardships of such scandals.

“There have been no incidents in Madison in the nine years Bishop O’Connor has been here,” Brophy said.

When asked about the celibacy issue and its chances of being done away with, Brophy was not optimistic.

“I would be surprised if the Vatican would review anything on this issue,” he said.

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