



# STUMBLING BLOCKS TO STEPPING-STONES

## Clergy sexual abuse crisis, part 2 of 4

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**A SEXUAL-ABUSE CRISIS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?** How could God let this happen? In all of us, evil and sin happen one poor choice at a time. We lose our way when we forget WHO we are and WHOSE we are, when selfishness and self-satisfaction replace Jesus' one and only commandment, and when we fail to prioritize love of God and then apply that love to neighbor. The extent of our evil deeds illustrates the brokenness of our souls. Healthy souls do not harm others intentionally.

There is no excuse for this horror. It might be more useful for us to pursue the next steps: "How can we work on ourselves to avoid mistreating others?" and "How can this crisis become a stepping-stone for future good?"

### FOUR STEPPING-STONES FOR ENCOURAGEMENT AND DIRECTION

**1.** Deal with the anger. Name, claim, and tame it! *Anger* is a general word. *Name it* with more concrete descriptors: annoyed, exasperated, vexed, indignant, outraged, overwhelmed. *Claim it* by describing how or why the event affects you: "I feel violated, robbed of innocence, betrayed." *Tame it* with a resolution: "Going forward I will \_\_\_\_\_."

**2.** Our faith is rooted in God and demonstrated in the person of Jesus.

**T** Read our online coverage of developments in the Church's actions regarding the sexual abuse scandal: [todayct.us/2VjiSe8](http://todayct.us/2VjiSe8)

His human representatives and Church dogmas, customs, rituals, and traditions are vehicles to lead us to Jesus. Choose to characterize your faith by attention, awareness, and devotion. Be attentive to the meaning of the words and rituals of faith practice. Cultivate self-awareness and express your needs to God. Approach sacramental encounters

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in a spirit of devotion. Within your soul, stir up love, awe, affection, dedication, and a desire to show love for God, to grow in personal relationship with him, and to witness to the Gospel.

**3.** HALT. We need to review our own situations so we have the strength to combat the abuse crisis in effective ways. Our defenses break down when we are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. We seek compensations at those times, and the

opportunity to choose evil often follows. "Lead us not into temptation."

- In life-giving ways, feed your hungers — physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological.

- Acknowledge the source of your anger(s) and apply "name, claim, tame."

- *Loneliness* and *aleness* are not synonyms. Solitude is a helpful tool to cultivate. However, combat loneliness by developing hobbies; extend an invitation to another for a meal, a walk, or an activity; reach out to those less fortunate; and develop devotion to Eucharistic Adoration.

- Avoid exhaustion. Get proper rest, diet, and exercise. Limit electronic entertainment.

**4.** Reflect upon and discuss the wisdom contained in the hymn by M.D. Ridge, "The Lord Is My Hope."

- Lyrics [todayct.us/2KY6jCM](http://todayct.us/2KY6jCM)

- Video [todayct.us/2Lev7W6](http://todayct.us/2Lev7W6)

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