Relentless investigation instead of asserting own interests

What the Catholic Church can really change for the better!

In 2020, more than 14,500 cases of abuse were officially registered in Germany, in addition there were almost 18,000 cases of child pornography[1]. This is a deplorably high number that cuts across all levels of society and repeatedly attracts the interest of the media and the public. In May 2021, the conviction against former soccer player Christoph Metzelder for possession of child pornography became legally binding[2]. In March 2015, proceedings against the then SPD member of the Bundestag Sebastian Edathy were dropped after a guilty plea with a fine. Edathy failed in 2014 with a complaint against the search of his home due to his political immunity[3]. The cases against the teachers of the Odenwald School were all dropped in January 2010. The investigative article on systematic abuse at the Odenwald School was even discredited in 1999,[4] putting an end to further media coverage. In January 2022, the abuse report about the role of Cardinal Ratzinger made huge waves.

The differences in media coverage

We will explicitly not attempt here to relativize the crimes by comparing them. Nevertheless, we will elaborate three significant differences in reporting:

1. The media interest in the abuse cases of the Catholic Church was repeatedly brought to public attention, while the coverage of the other cases quickly died down.

2. While the abuse cases of the Catholic Church always put the whole Catholic Church in the media focus, the coverage in the other cases concentrated on the perpetrator himself and not the environment such as sports, political party, politics or school.

3. The cases of abuse in the Catholic Church always drew a demand for reform of the Catholic Church, while in the other cases no one has seriously called for the abolition of professional soccer, the SPD, or even a reform of the Bundestag. The question of protection against abuse at school was also not consistently discussed.

Abuse cases as media control

This illustrates in an impressive way that many reports are not about coming to terms with the cases of abuse in the Catholic Church, but about an attack on the Catholic Church itself. Cleverly placed links to #OutInChurch expose the attempt to specifically control and influence the development of the Catholic Church from the outside via the topic of abuse – precisely by steering public opinion. Topics such as a Synodal Path, democratization of the Catholic Church, or the abolition of celibacy are repeatedly mentioned as possible "solutions". However, as the other examples above illustrate, cases of abuse occur everywhere in society. The reforms demanded from the Catholic Church by the media would consequently have no influence at all on the cases of abuse themselves. While it may be cynical, the critics do not seem to be concerned with the protection of children. The issue is most often asserting one's own interests instead of relentless investigation.

What are the real problems in today's society?

The abuse reports should actually discuss approaches to better protect children in today's world. Today's youth reach adolescence in a society that made sexual perversion and debauchery the norm, where children have omnipresent and almost unlimited access to pornography, violence, and drugs. A society that lets them grow up with same-sex parents and abandons them to an unnatural family environment. A society that is even preparing to lift the ban on abortion in Germany. In which the governing party Die Grünen (Green Party) has advocated for the legalization of pedophilia[5] and precisely by doing so has bequeathed on our generation this heavy legacy of a broken and child-hostile society.

How should the Catholic Church respond?

The German Bishops' Conference - visibly affected by the accusations - is stumbling towards the reformers and critics without a clear concept and thus it opposes the universal church. But no one explains how abuse of children and young people is to be prevented by reforming Catholic doctrine. Precisely here lies the key to dealing with abuse cases. The sometimes-uncomfortable truth that we find in Catholic teaching must be rediscovered. Every Catholic must strive to orient his life truly and sincerely to the truth and to eradicate untruth, that is, sin, from his life. At the same time, the Church as a whole, must take an unsparing look at networks that have developed within the Church, which have allowed untruth to flourish, and as a result have sometimes even been elevated to the status of new truth. Does this remind you a little of the golden calf of the Israelites? The key, then, is not to

change Catholic doctrine, but to bring each individual, as well as the whole Church, back to the truth. It remains to be hoped that more German bishops will recognize this and dare to walk on the proven path of faith for the good of society and the children.

Sources

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3 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sebastian_Edathy

4 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odenwaldschule

5 https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/erste-ergebnisse-der-paedophilie-studie-forscher-enthuellen-so-kaempften-gruene-jahrelang-fuer-freien-kinder-sex_id_3077344.html

Maria 1.0 was launched in May 2019 in response to the Maria 2.0 movement, which developed from Münster, Germany, into a nationwide protest against the valid teaching authority of the Catholic Church and for women's access to ordained ministry. Maria 1.0 believes that "Mary does not need an update." The initiative wants to show "that there are also women who are faithful to the teachings of the Church." Since May 1, 2021, Clara Steinbrecher, a student (majoring in mathematics education and school psychology) has taken up the reins from Stöhr. Steinbrecher has already been part of the Maria 1.0 team for some time.