

# Vatican secretary of state says homosexuality, pedophilia related

VATICAN CITY - The Vatican secretary of state told reporters in Chile that no serious study has ever shown a connection between celibacy and pedophilia, but many psychologists and psychiatrists believe there is a connection between homosexuality and pedophilia.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who was visiting Chile April 6-12 to participate in events marking the country's bicentennial and to demonstrate Pope Benedict XVI's solidarity with victims of a Feb. 27 earthquake, made the remarks to reporters in Santiago.

"Many psychologists and many psychiatrists have demonstrated that there is no relationship between celibacy and pedophilia, but many others have shown, and they told me recently, that there is a relationship between homosexuality and pedophilia," the cardinal said April 12 after giving the opening talk at a meeting of the Chilean bishops' conference.

Cardinal Bertone told reporters that pedophilia is a pathology that "touches all categories of people," including priests, but "in a lower percentage" than the general population. Still, he said, "it is very serious, it is scandalous" that there are priests who abuse minors.

The cardinal also confirmed that Pope Benedict is reviewing the church's universal norms for handling accusations of sex abuse against clergy. He gave no details about what revisions would be made.

Asked to comment on Cardinal Bertone's remarks about pedophilia and homosexuality, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said church leaders must rely on experts in psychology and medicine to understand the phenomenon of pedophilia.

The only thing church leaders can say for certain, he said April 14, is what their own statistics tell them about the priests who have abused minors and whose cases have

been reported to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Father Lombardi said the data released by the doctrinal congregation in March showed that 60 percent of the 3,000 cases handled by the Vatican since 2001 involved sexual attraction toward male adolescents, 30 percent involved heterosexual relations, and the remaining 10 percent were cases of pedophilia, involving an adult sexual preference for pre-pubescent children.

“Obviously, this refers only to the problem of abuse by priests and not in the general population,” Father Lombardi said.

At a Vatican symposium on sex abuse in 2003, experts described homosexual orientation as one of many risk factors of sexual abuse, but not a direct cause of pedophilia. In describing homosexuality as a risk factor, the researchers cited the preponderance of victims who were boys; others, however, have argued that for real pedophiles, the primary factor is access to children, not whether the child is a boy or girl.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has commissioned a study, expected to be complete late this year, looking at the “causes and contexts” of clerical sexual abuse in the United States.

Presenting the preliminary results of the study, a researcher from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York told the U.S. bishops in November, “At this point, we do not find a correlation between homosexual identity and the increased likelihood of subsequent abuse.”