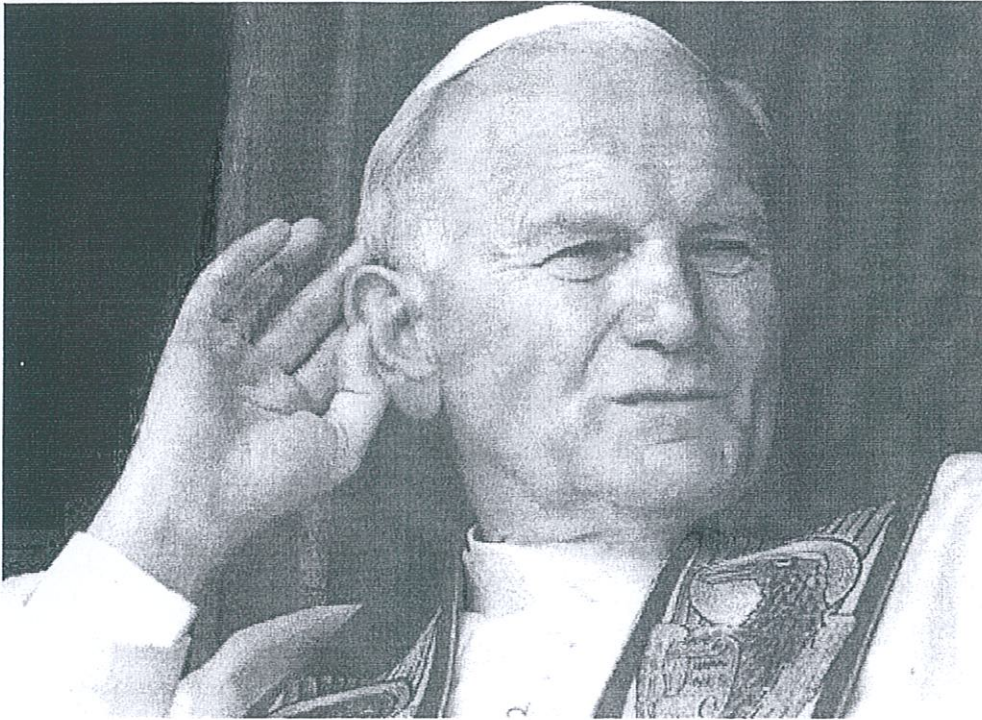


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## "Lied Without Lying"



A formal investigation of Dublin's Catholic Archdiocese concludes that there is "no doubt" that child sexual abuse was covered up by Church authorities over four decades. Patsy McGarry has more:

One of the most fascinating discoveries in the Dublin Archdiocese report was that of the concept of "mental reservation" which allows clerics mislead people without believing they are lying. According to the Commission of Investigation report, "mental reservation is a concept developed and much discussed over the centuries, which permits a church man knowingly to convey a misleading impression to another person without being guilty of lying".

The NYT story today is here. More here from the AP:

[A] report in May sought to document the scale of abuse as well as the reasons why church and state authorities didn't stop it, whereas Thursday's 720-page report focused on why church leaders in the Dublin Archdiocese – home to a quarter of Ireland's 4 million Catholics – did not tell police about a single abuse complaint against a priest until 1995. By then, the investigators found, successive archbishops and their senior deputies – among them qualified lawyers – already had compiled confidential files on more than 100 parish

priests who had sexually abused children since 1940. Those files had remained locked in the Dublin archbishop's private vault.

The investigators also dug up a paper trail documenting the church's long-secret insurance policy, taken out in 1987, to cover potential lawsuits and compensation demands. Dublin church leaders publicly denied the existence of the problem for a decade afterward -- but since the mid-1990s have paid out more than euro10 million (\$15 million) in settlements and legal bills..."

If the Catholic church were a secular institution in Ireland and had been found guilty of child abuse to the massive extent the Church has, it would be forced to close. Its top officials would not be issuing statements of apology and regret, but serving sentences in jail. The name of John Paul II would not be a revered mantra; it would be synonymous with the head of an international organization that had to be dragged kicking and screaming to acknowledge its own long-running, institutional brutalization of generations of defenseless children.

In the name of Jesus.

(Photo: the Pope who presided over an era of denial and cover-up of child-rape, John Paul II, by Derrick Ceyrac/AFP/Getty.)

[http://andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com/the\\_daily\\_dish/2009/11/11/1/lie-without-lying.html](http://andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com/the_daily_dish/2009/11/11/1/lie-without-lying.html)

## Church 'lied without lying'



Cardinal Desmond Connell: explained 'mental reservation' as method whereby clerics can 'lie without lying'

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/1126/breaking86.htm>

PATSY MCGARRY, Religious Affairs Correspondent

One of the most fascinating discoveries in the Dublin Archdiocese report was that of the concept of "mental reservation" which allows clerics mislead people without believing they are lying.

According to the Commission of Investigation report, "mental reservation is a concept developed and much discussed over the centuries, which permits a church man knowingly to convey a misleading impression to another person without being guilty of lying".

It gives an example. "John calls to the parish priest to make a complaint about the behaviour of one of his curates. The parish priest sees him coming but does not want to see him because he considers John to be a troublemaker. He sends another of his curates to answer the door. John asks the curate if the parish priest is in. The curate replies that he is not."

The commission added: "This is clearly untrue but in the Church's view it is not a lie because, when the curate told John that the parish priest was not in, he mentally reserved the words '...to you'."

Marie Collins, who was abused by a Dublin priest, "was particularly angered by the use by the Church authorities of 'mental reservation' in dealing with complaints." the report said.

It continued that Cardinal Desmond Connell had explained the concept to the commission as follows:

"Well, the general teaching about mental reservation is that you are not permitted to tell a lie. On the other hand, you may be put in a position where you have to answer, and there may be circumstances in which you can use an ambiguous expression realising that the person who you are talking to will accept an untrue version of whatever it may be - permitting that to happen, not willing that it happened, that would be lying. It really is a matter of trying to deal with extraordinarily difficult matters that may arise in social relations where people may ask questions that you simply cannot answer. Everybody knows that this kind of thing is liable to happen. So mental reservation is, in a sense, a way of answering without lying."

Example of how they experienced the use of such 'mental reservaton' by Church authorities in Dublin were supplied to the commission by Mrs Collins and fellow abuse victim Andrew Madden.

In Mrs Collins's case, the Dublin archdiocese said in a 1997 press statement that it had co-operated with gardai where her complaint of abuse was concerned. She was upset by it as she had reason to believe otherwise. Her support priest Fr James Norman made inquiries and later told gardai he that when he did so, the archdiocese replied "we never said we co-operated fully" - placing emphasis on the word 'fully' - with gardai.

In Mr Madden's case, Cardinal Connell emphasised he did not lie to the media about the use of diocesan funds for the compensation of clerical child sexual abuse victims.

<sup>Mr</sup> He explained to <sup>the victim</sup> Mr Madden he had <sup>informed</sup> told journalists "that diocesan funds ARE (report's emphasis) not used for such a purpose; that he had not said that diocesan funds WERE not used for such a purpose. By using the present tense he had not excluded the possibility that diocesan funds had been used for such purpose in the past. <sup>The victim said</sup> According to Mr Madden, Cardinal Connell considered that there was an enormous difference between the two."

In May 1995, Cardinal Connell denied that diocesan funds were used in paying compensation to abuse victims. When it emerged on RTÉ in September that year that Ivan Payne was loaned €30,000 by the archdiocese to pay compensation to Mr Madden, Cardinal Connell still insisted this was not compensation by the archdiocese. He threatened to sue RTÉ, but did not do so.

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