

Italy: November 2025 EN-RE Website EDITORIAL 4

The tragedy of clergy sex abuses remains a relevant issue in Italy, because further cases are emerging, and because it is becoming more evident how they find their roots in clericalism, and in particular in the authority of the clergy over the laity, and over the most vulnerable persons, young people and women.

Italian bishops do not intend to open an independent enquiry on this issue, as it happened in many other countries, where independent inquiries have brought to the understanding of the numbers of people involved in these unacceptable practices, and shown the need for much more determined measures to stopping them, assisting and supporting the victims and bringing the culprits to judgement; an inquiry carried out by the Catholic University of Milan, however qualified in academic terms, cannot be deemed really independent.

In the last few weeks, Adista, NoiSiamoChiesa and ItalyChurchToo, a group of Catholics engaged in fighting clerical abuses in the Catholic church, have organized two days of meetings in Milan, on the 29th of October, and on the 18th of November, that have gathered more than one hundred people, to discuss the issue. In the first meeting the results of the only independent legal enquiry carried out in Italy, at diocese level, in Bressanone was presented, while in the second meeting attention was given to the systemic nature of the issue, that does not depend on individual criminal behaviour but it is deeply connected with question of the authority in the Church and in a conception of the priest as *alter Christus*, thus introducing a powerful element of distortion in the relationships within the Church; the clerical context becomes characterized by a tendency to hurt those that are weaker, that goes beyond individual vulnerability to become a social structure of *vulnerability*, where people can be hurt just because they tend to be confident and open. The psychological dimensions of the abuse, as well as the ways of healing the victims, and the community, have been discussed: they necessarily start from the overcoming silence and self-defence efforts of the clerical structure, dismantling the *structure of sin* that has been created.

Some innovation of the Canon law concerning abuse have been noted, but further progress is needed.

It has been also strongly stressed how bringing light on these terrible issue is not against the Church, but rather necessary in order to defend the Church against its own sins and limits, that have alienated from the

Church and from the faith a number of the faithful, disgusted by these crimes and by the way the Church has reacted to them.

It is interesting that in October, for the first time in Italy, a bishop, Rosario Gisana, bishop of Enna in Sicily, is on trial for perjury, accused of having given false testimony in a process against a priest of his diocese accused of sexual abuse against minors, who was eventually condemned to 3 years in prison.

Basilio Buffoni, Noi Siamo Chiesa, November 2025