

Fall 2023 Flannery Lecture in Catholic Theology

Should Christians Forgive the Church for Clerical Sexual Abuse?

Monday
October 16, 2023
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM
Cataldo Globe Room

Catholics who love the church might want to forgive the church for its terrible history of clerical abuse, but should we? To answer this question, we need to distinguish the wrongdoing of particular clerics (both abusers and their enablers) from the injustice perpetrated by the institution as a whole (particularly in the culture and structures of clericalism). Repentance is not simply contrition, but a whole process through which the wrongdoer expresses remorse, expresses an apology, makes amends for the damage that has been caused, and undertakes a commitment to personal reform. If we are convinced the church has not adequately fulfilled these requirements, how are we called to respond?

About the Fall 2023 Flannery Lecturer

Stephen J. Pope, Ph.D. (GU Class of 1977)

Stephen J. Pope is a Professor in the Department of Theology at Boston College, where he teaches courses on social justice, the virtues, and the intersection of science and theology. He received his B.A. in philosophy from Gonzaga University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in theological ethics from the University of Chicago. His publications include *The Ethics of Aquinas* (editor, Georgetown University Press, 2002), *Human Evolution and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), and *A Step Along the Way: Models of Christian Service* (Orbis, 2015). He is currently working on a book project entitled, *God's Love and Ours: A Christian Ethic of Forgiveness*. He has worked for over ten years as a volunteer for Catholic chaplaincies in several Massachusetts prisons, and presented in a variety of workshops focused on the contribution of faith communities to restorative justice and political reconciliation for Catholic Relief Services and the Jesuit Refugee Service.



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