

SONS OF PERDITION

By Jay Nelson

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New Mexico was the epicenter of the first major epidemics of Catholic clergy sexual abuse and hierarchical cover-ups. Today most people recall the tsunami in Boston in January 2002 at the event that blew the lid off the Catholic barrel of toxic waste. Not so! Sons of Perdition is the first credible account of wave of revelations of sex abuse and betrayal of trust by the Catholic clergy of New Mexico. The author thoroughly combed through a tangled array of data from divergent sources and pieced together this sordid story. Those who want to close their eyes to this sorry chapter in Catholic history will be shocked but Jay Nelson comes up with the facts and not more myth. His historical inserts on the Church in the southwest provide a context and cultural backdrop that frames the church's betrayal and makes it even more outrageous. Of necessity the author had to include the story, as best as it can be known, of the Servants of the Paraclete, the tiny religious community of men dedicated to finding a way to cure or at least control priests suffering from substance abuse or worse, from destructive sexual dysfunction. Given the fact that some or even much of the accurate information about the church's antics remains hidden in archives somewhere, Jay Nelson did an outstanding job finding just about everything that is out there and not buried under a blanket of denial and lies, and using it all, putting together a chapter of Catholic history that must be told. No story of clergy abuse can be told without including the "eminence grise" in Rome, the Vatican. Jay does a very credible job tying the top of the Church ruling structure to the nightmares unfolding in the southwestern desert.

All in all Sons of Perdition is a valuable contribution to the body of written history about the worst disaster to hit the church in a thousand years....a disaster of its own making.