

# Sons of Perdition

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## NM's Biggest Clergy Abuse Mysteries Still Unsolved

Seventeen years ago this month, Monsignor Arthur J. Perrault vanished without a trace. He was a popular and highly placed priest in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe, a close friend of then-Archbishop Robert Sanchez. Father Perrault was also a bold and opportunistic sexual predator who left a string of young victims of both sexes in his wake — and he has never been seen again.

How Perrault rose to such heights, who helped him, and how he safely slipped away while on sabbatical remain question marks. But while his case presents the greatest mysteries yet remaining from the clergy abuse scandals that rocked New Mexico in the early 1990s, they are not the only secrets left.

Perrault's successful flight began years of exposés of one shamed priest after another. Shocking revelations soon came out involving the archbishop himself, who fell in disgrace. Of wider significance to the crisis was the discovery of the central importance of an order of monks, the Servants of the Paraclete, then headquartered in Jemez Springs. Devoted to caring for fallen priests, they played a critical role in the scandals in New Mexico and all across the nation.

Questions raised then have been posed again recently in a book by a native New Mexican. *SONS OF PERDITION* puts the story together in the context of colonial history and that of the entire Catholic Church. "There were many reasons New Mexico became an 'ecclesiastical dumping ground'," claims Jay Nelson, the author, "just as attorney Bruce Pasternack said, but that's only a small part of the puzzle."

"Significant portions of Archbishop Sanchez' testimony are still sealed after fifteen years. Why?" Nelson asks. "The Servants of the Paraclete claim to have long ceased caring for perpetrating priests hereabouts, but where have all of their 'guests' gone?"

Nelson says he is one of the two hundred or so known clergy abuse victims in the state. He worked for over a decade with the now-defunct Linkup, then the nation's leading clergy victim advocacy group, compiling news summaries from around the world. His book, he claims, is the first one to examine the crisis in New Mexico, and one of the few actual histories written by an abuse survivor. Father Tom Doyle, recognized as one of the leading experts in the field, said, "Jay does a very credible job tying the top of the Church ruling structure to the nightmares unfolding in the southwestern desert."

"The picture I've discovered is both surprising and quite disturbing. For many troubling questions about what happened still linger, including the pope's actions in all this," Nelson says. "But the New Mexican scandals were unique, and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe still has a lot to answer for. They could start by telling us where Art Perrault is and what became of him."

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For more information, please see the website below.

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*SONS OF PERDITION: New Mexico in the Secret History of the Catholic Sex Scandals*

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