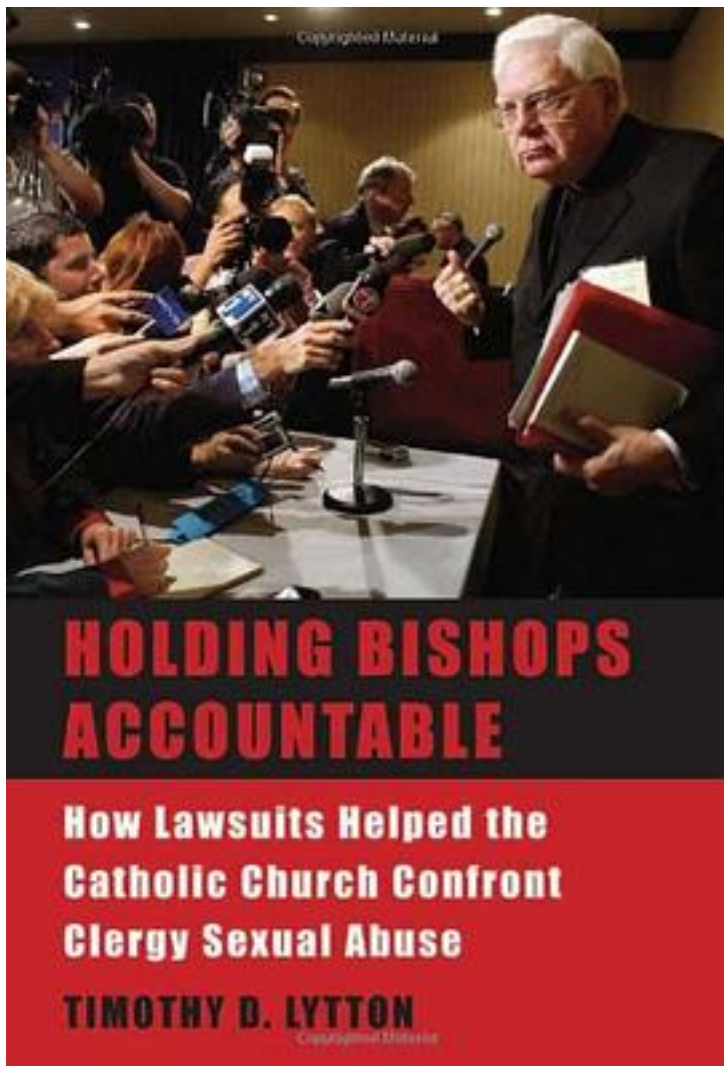


Holding Bishops Accountable



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The sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy is arguably the most acute crisis Catholicism has faced since the Reformation. The prevalence of clergy sexual abuse and its shocking cover-up by church officials have obscured the largely untold story of the tort system's remarkable success in bringing the scandal to light, focusing attention on the need for institutional reform, and spurring church leaders and public officials into action. Stories of the tort system as an engine of social justice are rare. "Holding Bishops Accountable" tells one such story by revealing how pleadings, discovery documents, and depositions fueled media coverage of the scandal. Timothy Lytton shows how the litigation strategy of plaintiffs' lawyers gave rise to a widespread belief that the real problem was not the actions of individual priests but rather the church's massive institutional failure. The book documents how church and government policymakers responded to the problem of clergy sexual abuse only under the pressure of private lawsuits. As Lytton deftly demonstrates, the lessons of clergy sexual abuse litigation give us reason to reconsider the case for tort reform and to look more closely at how tort litigation can enhance the performance of public and private policymaking institutions.

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目录:

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