

**SAINT ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH
SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
LISTENING AND DISCUSSION SESSION
Sunday, August 26, 2018
Facilitator: Dr. Emmett Burke**

Table Group Responses – 35 participants

How have you been feeling about this recent news?

- ◆ Heartbroken, depressed, a “blue” week
- ◆ Sad, angry, frustrated; the complexity of it all, worldwide
- ◆ Church leadership disappointment
- ◆ The articles and murkiness – left in the dark
- ◆ Sick, horrified, disgusted – the “holy” not-so-holy
- ◆ Misguided loyalties – the protection of people within the institution (protecting the Church) rather than those that follow the teachings of the Church
- ◆ Violation – that were ruthless and continuous

- ◆ Horrified, embarrassed, sad, mystified, puzzled
- ◆ Priests were not questioned; put on pedestals and “next to God”
- ◆ Abuse of power
- ◆ God has a plan – Satan has a plan to destroy the Church
- ◆ Do not understand why full disclosure did not occur until now?
- ◆ Why did priests have the abuse problem?

- ◆ Anger, sadness, lack of surprise
- ◆ Utter hypocrisy of white-male hierarchy
- ◆ Abandonment by the Church; loss of trust; loss of the Church we knew as children
- ◆ Victims carry pain forever
- ◆ Our faith calls us to forgive while still holding offenders accountable

- ◆ Embarrassed, ashamed, angry, sickened
- ◆ Thanks for local priests for starting this dialogue

- ◆ Shocked, but should not have been; result of outside infiltration to priesthood
- ◆ Horrible betrayal; the number, quantity, frequency
- ◆ Shattered at number of bishops involved in cover-up
- ◆ Somewhat understanding of actions based on needs with fewer priests
- ◆ Priesthood was/is a hiding place for pedophiles

What would you like to say to Church leadership about your concerns?

- ◆ Leadership and being vigilant
- ◆ See something – say something
- ◆ It what we are currently doing help enough?
- ◆ Mandatory reporting – make it well known
- ◆ Failure to report – punishment and consequences
- ◆ Accountability; levels of punishment
- ◆ Secret archives need to be turned over; transparency
- ◆ We need a law against confidentiality agreements – buying off crimes
- ◆ Support to help victims become survivors for the Church to thrive
- ◆ The structures of the Church in front of God – idolatry
- ◆ Complaints are locked up – secrets

- ◆ More laity involvement needed in choosing or letting priests go
- ◆ More accountability, full disclosure, listening sessions
- ◆ Married priests – would that help?
- ◆ How can we help those that have been hurt?
- ◆ Catholic Church also need to be publicly “defended” – not all priests/religious have this problem

- ◆ Break the circle of secrecy
- ◆ Need Hotline for reporting
- ◆ Prosecute criminal behavior – no more covering up abuse – total transparency
- ◆ Church leaders must be accountable
- ◆ Offer regular updates to what is happening
- ◆ More leadership roles for women (i.e. deacons, etc.)
- ◆ Church should sell everything (property, art works, etc.) and use the money for the victims – we need to be a humble Church
- ◆ Should the sainthood of Pope John Paul II be revoked – he knew
- ◆ Do not allow any offending priest, bishop, cardinal to remain and be taken care of by the Church
- ◆ No statute of limitations – report suspicions to authorities

- ◆ Have a lay person we can go to with any concerns about Church leadership – needs to be published
- ◆ Would like to see list of credibly accused priests
- ◆ Laity need to be trusted and more involved
- ◆ Transparency – clergy must release iron grip on Church
- ◆ The bishops of the U.S. should resign as did the bishops in Chile

- ◆ How did we get here? How did it get concentrated into priesthood?

- ◆ Reform has to happen – our children have to be protected
- ◆ The Church, bishops, priests need to come clean
- ◆ Church needs to allow priests to marry
- ◆ We need a plan for real and fast action to be taken as quickly as possible

Flip-Chart Notes

- ◆ Importance of increasing lay leadership moving forward
- ◆ Role of forgiveness
- ◆ Issue: statutes of limitations
- ◆ Necessity of being Christ-centered
- ◆ Realities of shame, betrayal, shattered children
- ◆ Hypocrisy
- ◆ Betrayal of trust
- ◆ Impact of secrecy
- ◆ Role of women in the Church
- ◆ Need for transparency and accountability
- ◆ Periodic updates would be helpful

Summary Comments

- ◆ Information was shared regarding AOB Hotline, list of credibly accused on web site and the requirements of “Letters of Suitability” and granting of faculties for priests to minister outside of their diocese
- ◆ Reinforcement was made about the vigilance of Staff commitment in continuous implementation of AOB Child & Youth Protection Policies and Procedures, noting the two-fold focus of Criminal Background Checks and Shield the Vulnerable/VIRTUS practices – for both screening and education of Church ministers
- ◆ AOB resource information about “Reporting Abuse” is included on the parish web site, as well as contact/reporting information for Washington County Department of Social Services
- ◆ These Summary Notes, along with the cover letter to Archbishop Lori will be posted on the parish web site
- ◆ Staff will continue to monitor parishioner needs and identify additional future opportunities for a similar Listening/Discussion Session(s)