

John Chuchman sent the following poem:

**Undoing Vatican II
Solidifying the Monarchy
*For the Foreseeable Future***

The Catholic Church
is being moved in a disturbing direction,
one that could take ages to reverse.

The Second Vatican Council
was an Awakening
of All of the People of God;
An Historic Event.

It acknowledged the whole People of God
as a Communion
before it spoke of the pope and bishops
as a communion within that
larger Communion.

Unfortunately,
maybe even disastrously,
Canon law re-written since Vatican II,
separates the non-ordained
OUT again,
excluding them from decision making,
with only the hierarchy
having the power of governance.

We can cooperate with the hierarchy
in this power
but cannot share in it.

Canon Law of John Paul II
and Cardinal Ratzinger
restores the negative definition of us
as non-clerics.

We are defined as
The Other Members of the Christian Faithful.

In the first millenium,
we non-ordained, summoned ecumenical councils,
with most participants non-clerics.
For centuries, non-ordained abesses had
powers of jurisdiction.

Vatican II
opened the door
to a New Church Order
based on *Communion*;
but this is all being undone
by the present hierarchy
in favor of
a church order based on
Absolute Monarchy.

Vatican II
established doctrine
that the College of Bishops
With the pope
governs the church.

Canon law since then
nullifies this doctrine.

Vatican II put bishops' conferences
on a par with church synods,
in line with early church practice,
giving them oversight of
all liturgical reforms.

This opened up promising ecumenical reconciliation
with the churches of the East
who have preserved synods through the ages.

John Paul II in his 1998 Apostolic Letter
left the bishops' conferences
without any voice of their own right.
He wrote that
Collegiality does not exist
except when the bishops are together with the pope
in an ecumenical council.
He wrote that they can say nothing
without the Holy See's agreement.
He made the bishops' conferences
mere associations of the individual bishops.

**The function of the episcopate
has been taken over by the primacy of the pope.**

The voice of the Catholic Church
has become a single blast on a trumpet,
not the blended music of an entire orchestra.

Loyalty and Obedience
are required to be appointed bishop;
Creativity
is suspect.

The doctrine of infallibility
previously
carefully restricted,
has been expanded enormously
by the hierarchy.

Neither Vatican I, nor Vatican II
conceived such an expansion.

To guard the Faith,
Ratzinger signed a document
that required all officeholders
to sign
an expanded profession of faith
and *oath of fidelity*
to a brand new category of
definitive teaching
that is *irreformable*
and *sanctioned by Canon Law*.

This opened up a whole field
of *infallibility*,
agreed to by no one
except the papacy.

Previously, a pope had to speak
Ex-Cathedra
to be infallible,
now,
it is enough for Ratzinger
to indicate that his statement
is intended to be **definitive**.

No more is required.

The *Panzer-Cardinal* is in evidence.

This change,
in a forceful and subtle way,
is shaping the church of the future
into a complete and total monarchy.

To change this,
the legal barriers prohibiting the non-ordained
from participating in decision making
must be revoked
so we can participate
in shaping Future Church.

Else,
serfs in the structure
we will remain,
loyal and obedient,
like the bishops,
not to Jesus,
who was supposed to be the last high priest,
but to the current pope,
whoever that might be.

The editors of America magazine wrote the following.

The Millstone

The shame associated with the abuse of children by Catholic priests is borne these days by all Catholics forced to explain to incredulous friends and acquaintances how this could have happened, how it could have gone on so long, how it could have been allowed to become so extensive—questions that still require a proper answer. Like a millstone around our necks, the scandal, year after endless year, drags us all down with it. How the church as the people of God respond to it should not be a question of loyalty to the pope nor even more demands for his resignation; it is a matter of restoring the church's integrity as an institution and renewing the life of holiness for its members. It is a matter of corporate conversion.

It is clear we are no longer dealing with an "American problem." We never were. This is a global crisis that requires a church-wide strategy. The whole church—from parish to diocese to Roman Curia—needs to respond with the resources and the urgency it demands. Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, argues it is time for a thorough housecleaning. "We need a culture of alertness and bravery," he said, "to do the housework," and we must begin with caring for the victims.

Seek out the victims. Instead of waiting for victims of abuse to step forward, we should seek them out. During his 2008 visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI met with victims of abuse; he has promised to do the same in Ireland. These meetings need to be replicated by bishops and pastors wherever abuse is alleged. Though he seems to have had a tragic blind spot with respect to sexual abuse by the clergy, the late Pope John Paul II set a precedent for a ministry of apology and forgiveness for the offenses of church people. Small- and large-scale apologies need to be offered and forgiveness requested by bishops in dioceses where abuse has been committed. Public repentance needs to be demonstrated, as Cardinal Sean O'Malley showed with a penance service early in his healing ministry in Boston. Finally, funds should be established for the psychological healing and social support, where needed, of victims aimed at making them as whole as possible. Acts of piety and even reparation will be insufficient, however, without church reform as the manifestation of institutional conversion. Deeper institutional conversion will entail transparency, accountability and lay empowerment.

Come clean. "There is nothing that is concealed that will not be revealed," Jesus said. The image of the church has been so profoundly diminished that there is now no point in forestalling investigations or attempting to stamp out brushfires of scandal. Innocent lives have been desecrated. At this point Catholics and others feel that desecration is drawn out wherever the church's response is perceived to be halting and defensive. But the distressing truth is that surely more revelations await in countries where the poor have few resources or where legal systems are inadequate to respond to such crimes. Church offices should reveal all they know about the breadth and depth of this crisis. As in all organizational recoveries, transparency is necessary.

Be accountable. There are the sins of the clerics to contend with, but there is also the sin of clericalism that helped feed this crisis through silence and denial. Many bishops have persisted in their refusal to accept accountability for failure in supervision of priest personnel.

A handful of bishops have resigned, and in his letter to the church in Ireland Pope Benedict admitted the failures of the hierarchy in perpetuating the scandal. Members of the hierarchy may continue to find enemies in the media, and the media is not without fault, but for the most part the complicity of superiors in these crimes remains to be acknowledged. For genuine conversion in this matter, a searching examination of conscience over the sins of the institution will be needed.

Empower the laity. Lay participation in church governance is a conciliar value more honored in the breach than in the practice. That is no longer acceptable. The faithful must insist that parish and diocesan pastoral councils be activated and that they be given greater authority in canon law. Positions of real responsibility also need to be assigned to lay people and women religious for

decision-making roles in church government. Humility should be a virtue for all to embrace just now, but especially for church leaders in seeking the guidance of the faithful. Whether what emerges in the future is a more humble but institutionally stronger church or a community in decline may be decided by the actions the church takes in the coming weeks and months to renew the spirit and structures of its own governance. For there is a conversion for institutions as well as for individuals, and it is often even harder to embrace.

The first article I ever submitted to the parish bulletin when I was a deacon was on “wonder.”

Chasing an Elusive God Starts With Wonder
by Hank Mattimore

“It is terrible to watch a man who has the incomprehensible in his grasp, does not know what to do with it, and who sits playing with a toy called God.”

Tolstoy

Pardon my irreverence but haven't you ever wondered, maybe after a couple of drinks, “Who in the heck is God anyway?” Forget for a moment all those pat answers you have heard from theologians or prophets or founders of religions. They don't know any more than you do.

For me, when I do tune out all that I have heard from the mystics and religious experts I find myself face to face with what Tolstoy calls “the incomprehensible.” We define the Deity with words like Creator, Father, Mother, Higher Power, Spirit. We describe God as “within us” or “beyond us.” He/She is the “Master of the Universe” or “Love” or “the ground of all being.” Perhaps inelegantly but in good faith, my own Dad referred to God as “the Man upstairs.”

Me? I know nothing. First I see God; then I don't. If I stopped there and decided not to worry my head over it, I would have plenty of company. The world is full of people who don't give a rap about whether a supreme being exists or not. God is irrelevant. Who cares? Let's talk about sex or sports or politics.

But wait. The agnostics and the atheist are not the only ones who give up on an incomprehensible God. I went to Mass last Sunday with a woman who was troubled because, while she had no difficulty in seeing God in the people attending services, she was unable to connect with the liturgy or the words from the pulpit. “It all seemed so tired,” she told me, “almost as though the service was hiding God rather than revealing him.”

Religious practice can do that to people. It is so much easier, albeit boring, to say

words that endless repetition have rendered meaningless, than to challenge ourselves to ask “Who is this spirit we call God?” What a paradox to find ourselves, in church, hiding from God or in Tolstoy’s words “playing with a toy called God.”

For me any real search for the meaning of God has to begin and end with WONDER. A baby giggles. The sweet scent of jasmine graces my nostrils. I lose myself in the silence of a redwood grove. Two people pledge their mutual love in marriage. An old woman kneels in prayer. A young boy comes of age. A man donates one of his kidneys to a stranger. A mom cuddles with her child. The sun rises heralding a new day. I’m in awe of creation and I can’t help searching for the Creator.

It really is all about WONDER, a wonder that erupts from my inner being and pleads for a response. There is no way I can suppress this wonder at the beauty and mystery of life and act as though it were no big deal. Surely I am not alone in finding it odd that most of us will spend mucho time and energy thinking about HOW things work but, only at funerals, will we pay attention to “why” things are the way they are. “What a terrible thing,” says Tolstoy “to have the incomprehensible within our grasp and then not know what to do with it,” or even worse not even to care.

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Grateful to Kathleen for submitting the following article link.

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2010/04/09/dont_look_to_rome_for_the_true_catholic_voices/

The next article appeared in the National Catholic Reporter. Thank you, Joe, for forwarding this.

Munich vicar general reportedly says he was forced to take the fall for Cardinal Ratzinger

By Thomas C. Fox

The cleric who last month took responsibility for moving a known pedophile priest into ministry in the Munich archdiocese in 1980 after the priest was allowed into the archdiocese by then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, is now reportedly saying he was pressured into taking the blame for that decision.

Vicar General Gerhard Gruber last month referred to the decision as a “serious mistake” and said he was solely responsible for the decision. After speaking once about his "mistake" to the Associated Press, Gruber disappeared from public view. I was in Munich at the time and tried to reach him several times, but always unsuccessfully.

But today we find Gruber in the news once again.

It is being reported that Gruber has said he took the fall only after coming under huge pressure from unnamed Catholic Church sources to take responsibility in order to “take the pope out of the firing line”.

In a letter to a friend, reportedly seen by German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, Gruber wrote that he was “begged” in numerous phone calls and after receiving a prepared statement by fax for him to sign. The magazine said Gruber expressed unhappiness in the letter at being given the sole blame in public. We almost certainly have not heard the last of this story.

Another contribution from John Chuchman.

Blessing of Those Divorcing

Leader: We gather here
recognizing the aspirations and dreams of many men and women
to live united in Love.

Assembly: Today we bring ourselves and our hopes.

Divorcing: We assemble with many feelings,
including some sadness and disappointment and apprehension.

But we come also,
with some sense of relief and hope and approval.

Leader: We know some life journeys require marriage to end
in solemn, courageous--and hopeful--divorce.

Assembly: We know we must surrender some noble and sacred bonds and
dreams.

Divorcing: We were married within the community,
and that the community is now present for our divorce.

Though our marriage is ending,
we will endeavor to value the past
and enter a new, respectful relationship
that transcends the pain and bitterness of the past.

We apologize to one another for any hurts caused;
May God also forgive us for any of our failings in the marriage.

Assembly: We trust God has forgiven us all.

Divorcing: We now enter a new life in which we hope love again.

We go forth, not in the hurt of ties wrenched and faith unachieved,
but with hope and belief in love yet possible.

Assembly: We offer our love and Support.

Divorcing: We call on society to acknowledge and support us
in our decision to separate.
It is to peace that God has called us.

We ask families and friends to recognize that the marriage is ended.

Assembly: We recognize your divorce and accept your divorce.

Leader: May God bless your separate lives and homes.
In the name of the Creator, Savior, and Sanctifier.

Assembly: May God bless all our lives and homes

Divorcing: We thank God for all our Blessings
including our friends and family.

All: Amen

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Thank you for forwarding the following call to action.

**Press release
Madrid / Rome, April 17, 2010**

**We are Church:
"Now is the time to start reforms long overdue:
Benedict XVI's fifth pontifical anniversary"**

International Movement We are Church asks all the faithful to support Hans Kueng's open letter to the bishops

The *International Movement We are Church* regrets that the fifth anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's election is so much tarnished by the deep crisis our Church at present is undergoing. We refer to the world-wide disclosure of sexual abuse scandals and their cover up for such a long time.

"It is not growing secularism that has caused the most profound crisis of our Church, but the inability of the Papacy to read the signs of the time", declares Raquel Mallavibarrena from the Spanish *Somos Iglesia*, present Chair of the *International Movement We Are Church*. "The abuse crisis and its concealment are due to an inhumane conception of sexuality and outdated patriarchal power structures. The actual global crisis makes it clear that the clerical hierarchy alone can't serve any longer as the foundation and justification of the Catholic church's institutional structure and authority."

We are Church appreciates the present activities of the Pope combating paedophilia in the Church. Benedict's tragedy is caused by the fact that he started it too late, too weakly, and that he is not supported enough by all cardinals, bishops, and the Roman Curia. He is now harvesting the fruits he sowed, when in 2001, as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) he ordered all bishops in the universal church to conceal from public authorities any case of sexual crime against minors by members of the clergy and instead to inform his office.

Joseph Ratzinger, who has held over the past three decades the highest institutional responsibility for shaping official Catholic doctrine, is accountable for the failure to respond to the challenges of our time in many fields, ignoring time and again the requests presented to him by some bishops, theologians and many lay faithful from all over the world, who have to face concrete pastoral challenges in their countries. Especially he has opposed with hostility the theology of Liberation. Now the five years of the pontificate of Benedict reveal more and more the fundamental weakness of the whole system of the Roman Catholic Church - its hierarchical constitution, "two-class society" priests / laity, the Roman centralism.

Moreover the strong opposition to the war, which characterised John Paul II, was abandoned by Benedict XVI who met very on friendly terms with the former US president George W. Bush, responsible for the attack on Iraq. The Pope must come back to vigorous opposition to heads of the States working for war and must speak very clearly about wars, disarmament and weapons trade.

"The uproar that went through the church all over the world when the Pope, in a solitary move of total disrespect for the principle of collegiality, lifted the

excommunication of the four bishops of the SSPX, was a clear manifestation of the distance of Pope Benedict XVI from the Second Vatican Council", states Pedro Freitas from *Nos Somos Igreja* in Portugal, who will soon take the *Chair of International Movement We Are Church*. "The extreme centralization of power and a total disregard of the principle of subsidiarity in the Church that has characterized Benedict's governance has alarming consequences, and accounts to a great degree for the growing pastoral challenges the local churches have to face, with vocations to an outdated form of priesthood dropping ever more and growing numbers of laity deserting."

The *International Movement We are Church* firmly supports Hans Kueng's open letter to the bishops in which he urges them to push for reforms. *We are Church* asks all the faithful to send emails and letters to their bishops and nuncios in support of Kung's open letter. The present crisis and the inadequacy of the response to the crisis by the church authorities show with unprecedented urgency that structural reforms in line with the Second Vatican Council *We Are Church* also has been asking for for 15 years cannot be postponed. Now is the time to start these reforms:

The People of God have to be allowed to participate at all levels of our Church so that innovative ways to meet the pastoral challenges of our time can be started. The faithful should have a say in the appointment of their bishops, otherwise Rome will continue appointing bishops who care more for the institution than for their flock.

Ecclesial misogyny should come to an end and women be admitted to all church ministries, which need to be ministries of service and not of power.

Celibacy should become optional, so that marital love is no longer a taboo for clerics.

The results of Human Sciences concerning sexual morals should come to be acknowledged and the primacy of the individual informed conscience should be respected.

The Gospel should be proclaimed as an invitation to life in fullness and not a means to discipline people through intimidation.

Pope Benedict should understand the ever louder, world-wide criticism of his

pontificate as an expression of deep concern for the welfare of the faithful of the whole Church. The Code of Canon Law says in Can. 212: "The Christian faithful are free to make known to the pastors of the Church their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires." (§2.) "According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons." (§3.)

Background Information:

The *International Movement We Are Church*, founded in Rome in 1996, is represented in more than twenty countries on all continents and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups. We Are Church is an international movement within the Roman Catholic Church and aims at renewal on the basis of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). *We Are Church* was started in Austria in 1995 with a church referendum, answering the paedophile scandal of the former Cardinal of Vienna/Austria, Hans-Hermann Groer.

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John recommends the following article:

<http://therevealer.org/archives/3836>

Bob circulated the following comments:

As the account on the Road to Emmaus dramatically emphasizes, the earliest followers of Jesus had to deal with their fear, disappointment, and dashed hopes with the crucifixion of Jesus. They, therefore, came to dwell more and more on his Resurrection and his miraculous powers, both during his life and after his death. To bolster their own courage and to attract converts, they preached Jesus to have been, and to be, the son of God--with the underlining especially of GOD.

As the years unrolled, Jesus became the Christ, He Who sits at the right hand of the Father, He who has conquered death, He who through his Spirit furnishes hope and strength to those suffering persecution from non-believers. The divinity of Christ stood forth while the humanity of Jesus fell back into the shadows. Some--like the Docetists, the first Christian heretics--even denied that humanity. For them Christ just took on the appearance of being human while remaining only and truly divine. Paul warned early on about those "who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim: 4:3). This in its extreme became Encratism (from Greek word for "abstinence") that preached denial of the flesh and sexuality, even to the embracing of castration: (this, by the way, led to intense discussions about whether Christians could remarry after a spouse died; out of this came the resolution in the Sacrament of Matrimony). This denial of humanity flourished in Manichaeism and has a history stretching down the centuries through Jansenism and Puritanism to the present-day glorification of celibacy.

To counter this obscuring of the humanity of Jesus, the Early Church preached how Jesus is our brother, how he is like us in all things but sin, how Jesus loves us and is always with us, how Jesus loved his mother and father, Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and all those who reached out to him in hope. Saved in Christ, we have taken on a new creation, a new being; our humanity has been radically changed in its redemption but is still humanity. Of course, we should live our lives on earth to the fullest, just as Jesus did. Some took the

humanity of Jesus to the extreme—like the Arians who considered Jesus as the greatest of men but in his humanity not god, to the Pelagians who preached that our humanity saved in Jesus meant that we could by our very nature do good and thus reach heaven without God's special help.

Christian apologists have done a dance through the ages, shifting now to one side or the other of this theological divide. So, for example, Augustine preaches original sin, the fall of mankind, and redemption through Christ's suffering. Thus he preserves the truth that all mankind needs Christ and Christ's grace in order to be saved. He was fighting the Pelagians here. When facing down the Manichaeans, he takes a different tack. Mankind is not evil as it is loved by Christ. We are not trying to get away from our human lives; we are rather trying to live more fully.

We end up in all this with confusion about Jesus and about us: Is Jesus Jesus or Christ? Are we good or evil? Should we try to get to heaven and avoid earth, or should we embrace earth in order to live ourselves into heaven?

As I have understood Borg through your discussion, I judge him coming down on the side of the humanity of Christ, not emphasizing the divinity, and on the side of our living here instead of yearning to get away from here and into heaven. He seems to attempt to bridge the gap by portraying Jesus as a "Jewish mystic," a man most sensitive to the presence of the divine in and among human beings and affairs. If I were to fashion my Christianity around the question "Who do you say that I am?", then I would come down on Borg's side of an answer.

But I don't. I don't have that question as one that is important to me. It really makes no difference to me who Jesus is. If Jesus is God, then I'm happy to have him in our corner with his love and assistance. If Jesus is rather a most extraordinary person, among the purest representations of the divine in humanity, I am thankful to both God and Jesus for their mutual gift of the divine to us.

The church, I think, has failed because it has taken as its task the preservation of, and the orthodox interpretation of, Christ's revelation to us about Him. For it, Christianity is about Christ. I disagree; for me, Christianity is about us. Christ to my mind doesn't care a fig whether we think that Christ is God or Man or some incomprehensible mixture of both. Christ didn't come to make us clear about him; he came to make it clear about us. If you just believe you can move mountains, you can do things greater than I have (cf. Mark 11:22-24; John 14: 1-12).

I do not embrace Christianity because of who Jesus is. I embrace it because it offers me the best path I know to become a mature and loving and good human being. I am grateful that Jesus through his life and the lives of his followers has shown me the way. I know what I am called to do, I know who I may be. I cannot hide behind some ignorance that shields me from striving to "be all that I can be."

When I die, I may find out that Jesus is the Christ who is God. That would be nice but only if I have done my best to be me. Or when I die, I may find out that Jesus is not God. That would be fine with me too because I didn't follow Jesus like someone betting on a winning horse in the Kentucky Derby; I follow, and hope to follow him all my life, because he showed me the best way to be me. I don't need to win; it's enough just to run.

I haven't tried to do this before, ... It's about my best effort, at least to date. I hope this encourages others to respond.

From John:

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/young-voices/words-matter>

The following three articles were forwarded by Joe. The author, Thomas Doyle, is a priest, canon lawyer, an addictions therapist and a long-time supporter of justice and compassion for clergy sex abuse victims. His article appeared on the *National Catholic Reporter* blog.

Revising history Vatican style

The latest Vatican attempt at damage control and image recovery is really an example of history revision. The Vatican has posted to its Web site a short explanation of the 2001 motu proprio, *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*. This decree was not hidden in official secrecy and is fairly well-known throughout the world. The short article provided a summary of the main action steps for cases of sexual abuse of minors by clerics. That offered nothing new. A real surprise, though, is found in one sentence: "Civil law concerning reporting of crimes to the appropriate authorities should always be followed."

This is the first time the Vatican has publicly agreed that sexual abuse of minors is not only a crime in the secular world, but one that should be reported to civil authorities.

The scandal that has been swirling around the institutional church for decades has been caused by the fact that bishops consistently did precisely the opposite of what the Vatican now presents as standard operating procedure. In spite of the hierarchy's efforts to first control and failing that, to contain the problem, it has finally reached the Vatican. This has sent shock waves through the ranks of the faithful including the hierarchy's staunch defenders. They are disturbed and even enraged, not by the unfolding evidence that the pope and the Vatican bureaucrats have been directly connected to the horrendous plague of child

molestation, but because the victims and their supporters, aided by the “Catholic bashing media”, have had the audacity to attack the Holy Father.

The Vatican denizens, the curial bureaucrats who actually run the institutional church, are understandably on the defensive and not doing such a great job at it. If the statement about reporting to civil authorities had been left alone and not commented on by anyone speaking for the Vatican, the damage caused by the document would have been minimal. Rather than stay quiet they came to the pope’s defense using the tried but not so true approach of revising history.

Nicole Winfield of The Associated Press reported that the “Vatican has insisted that it has long been the Catholic church’s policy for bishops, like all citizens, to obey civil laws.” Jeff Lena, the Vatican’s U.S. lawyer “has argued that there was nothing in canon law that ... precluded reporting.” He also made a vague reference to the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, which he claimed contains an “implicit understanding of the need to follow civil laws.” A Vatican spokesman, Fr. Ciro Benedettini said that a reporting requirement had been an internal policy of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith since 2003, a fact that he would have been better advised to keep to himself. If this policy has been buried in deep secrecy, what good is it?”

The Vatican and its defenders have short memories. In the aftermath of the January 2002 tsunami that hit Boston the very issue of reporting molesters to civil authorities quickly became prominent. The secular community couldn’t comprehend why suspected felons were not turned over to police or reports made to Child Welfare services. Some members of the hierarchy on the other hand couldn’t comprehend why anyone would have the audacity to demand that they should be turned over to the authorities. The resistance was supported by several very prominent ecclesiastics who pontificated to the world media. Apparently they didn’t get the word about the long-standing policy that urged reporting.

Cardinal Oscar Maradiaga of Honduras, who accused the U.S. attorneys who deposed Cardinal Bernard Law of using “Stalinist” tactics, said that clerics who have committed grave errors should be brought to justice by church tribunals. Revisionist history point one: raping children is an error, not a crime and the church tribunals, traditionally noted for slow non-functionality when it comes to due process, are the path to certain justice. Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda, an influential canon lawyer from the Gregorian University in Rome, published an article in 2002 replete with Vatican conventional wisdom. He said that civil authorities should be involved only after all church-based remedies have proven useless. He went on to assert that bishops are neither morally or judicially responsible for the acts of their clergy. He continued with the outrageous statement that a priest’s past acts of abuse should not be revealed to his congregation because he would be “totally discredited in front of his parochial community.”

Cardinal Julian Herrenz, retired head of the Pontifical Commission for Legislative Texts, expressed some equally surprising opinions in an article published by John Allen in 2002. Presuming expertise in the field of behavioral science, he stated that pedophilia is a form of homosexuality. Stepping back into his role as a world-class legal expert, he rejected the idea that church authorities be requested, much less required to report abuse cases to civil law enforcement. His justification appears to have been the safeguarding of the “rapport of trust and secrecy” between bishop and priest.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, now the Vatican secretary of state, was secretary at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2002 when he was quoted by John Allen as saying “In my opinion, the demand that a bishop be obligated to contact the police in order to denounce a priest who has admitted the offense of pedophilia is unfounded.” He went on to say that “...civil society must also respect the professional secrecy of priests, as it respects the professional secrecy of other categories.” There is nowhere in Catholic tradition, dogma or law where one can find any justification that supports this opinion.

In practice the policy has been to avoid contact with civil authorities and to cover up the crimes and the criminals. The newly created canonical tradition of referral to civil authorities is the result of one thing: the public outrage, the exposure from the media and the pressure for accountability in the civil courts. The appearance of the “Guide to Understanding” is a failed attempt at damage control through revision of history. It won’t work. The Vatican will never be able to “fix” the problem of clergy sexual abuse because the abuse is not the essential problem that needs fixing. It is the entire clerical culture that needs to be revamped from the inside out.

Clergy abuse scandal engulfs plans for Latin Mass at D.C. Basilica

By William Wan

Washington Post Staff Writer

It was planned as a solemn event -- a chance to experience the sacred liturgical roots of Catholic tradition at one of the country's most prominent churches. But after three years of fundraising and careful coordination, an elaborate Latin Mass scheduled for Saturday at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington has been dragged into the clergy abuse scandal. Advocates for abuse victims voiced outrage Tuesday that the former Vatican official invited to lead the Mass -- Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos of Colombia -- once praised a French bishop for not telling police about a priest who had sexually assaulted children. Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests sent letters Tuesday to Pope Benedict XVI and Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, calling on them to condemn Castrillón's remarks and replace him in the Mass.

"To hold the cardinal up in a position of honor and leadership after what he's said would just rub salt in to the wounds of millions of betrayed Catholics and thousands of wounded victims," said David Clohessy, SNAP's director.

At the center of the debate is Castrillón, the former head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, who made headlines last week when a 2001 letter he wrote to French Bishop Pierre Pican surfaced in the French press. In it, he praised Pican for not reporting the pedophile priest to police, despite being mandated to do so under French law.

"I congratulate you for not denouncing a priest to the civil administration," Castrillón wrote, after Pican was convicted of failing to report sex crimes against children. "You have acted well, and I am pleased to have a colleague in the episcopate who, in the eyes of history and of all other bishops in the world, preferred prison to denouncing his son and priest."

At the time the letter was written, the priest, the Rev. René Bissey, had been sentenced to 18 years in prison for repeatedly raping a boy and for sexually assaulting 10 other children.

On Saturday, Castrillón ignited another firestorm when he claimed that Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II, not only approved of his letter but also instructed him to send copies to bishops worldwide.

As the controversy unfolded, organizers of the Washington Mass watched in dread. Furious protests were the last thing the Paulus Institute expected when it invited Castrillón more than a year ago to lead its first major event.

"All we wanted to do is promote sacred liturgy," said Paul King, president of the Paulus Institute, which was formed in 2007 to preserve older forms of worship. "The reason we invited him is it's a complicated Mass. There aren't a whole lot of bishops who can say it and are available."

At first, King said, divine providence seemed to shine on their efforts. Scheduling conflicts at the Basilica -- the largest Catholic church in North America -- had made it impossible to hold the event in 2008 and 2009. So it was with care that organizers picked April 24, 2010, for their Mass. Weeks later, they realized it coincided with the fifth anniversary of Benedict's papal inauguration.

"It seemed like even the date was selected by God. It was like God himself was blessing our Mass," King said.

Now, he says, a more sinister force seems to be at work. "We've perceived things that are obviously the work of the devil," he noted darkly. "The disruption of this Mass by protesters, for example, is not something we invited."

But victims and activists said it is unthinkable for the Mass to continue with Castrillón as its leader.

"This is the wrong man, sending the wrong message at the wrong time," said Mark Serrano, a SNAP member who says he was molested by a priest as a child in New Jersey.

The group hasn't decided whether to protest outside the Basilica if Castrillón celebrates the Mass.

"We have no beef with the organizers of the Mass," Clohessy said. "But we're hoping the Vatican and archdiocese will take some action. It's important they show by deeds, and not just by words, what message they intend to send." Susan Gibbs, a spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of Washington, said the archbishop does not plan to intervene because the independent Paulus Institute is not connected with the archdiocese. Wuerl is not attending the Mass because of a fundraising dinner in Atlanta on Friday.

Gibbs said she had heard from at least one priest who decided against attending because of the controversy. "It's hard for people who have an affinity for this Mass," she said. "I think a lot of people right now don't know what to think of it all."

In addition to Castrillón, Saturday's service, billed as a "Pontifical Solemn High Mass Honoring Pope Benedict XVI," will involve eight other priests, eight torchbearers, two children's choirs with more than 100 singers, Gregorian chants and 16th-century music.

Said King: "We're continuing with the preparations and trying not to let everything else divert us."

Karen Munson, Manager of Content Operations for NPR's *Morning Edition*, is responsible for the following transcript.

STEVE INSKEEP, host:

This week on MORNING EDITION, we've been talking about the impact of sex abuse scandals on the Catholic Church. We've heard about how the scandals may shape Pope Benedict's legacy. We've heard the story of how Benedict punished a powerful priest when nobody else would.

Today, speaking in St. Peter's Square, the pope said the church would take action to confront the scandal. Now, the church's response to all this is of intense interest to E.J. Dionne. He's a columnist for the Washington Post, a senior fellow

with the Brookings Institution, regular guest on our program ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, and he's Catholic.

Now, I want to start on a kind of a personal note, if I might. What has it been like in your church the last few weeks?

Mr. E.J. DIONNE (Columnist, Washington Post, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution): Well, our pastor gave a very powerful sermon on Easter, about the scandal. And he said a lot of things that needed to be said, not only about individual culpability, but also about institutional culpability. And I think the church is...

INSKEEP: Did he say, we, the church, are guilty here?

Mr. DIONNE: Yes, he did. But he also was, at the end, a little bit defensive, talking about enemies of the church. And he sort of defended Pope Benedict. And I happen to love our pastor; he's a wonderful man. My sense is he would've been more effective just short of saying the mea culpa.

You know, I think that - the nuns used to tell us that there's nothing like a good confession. And I think that the church's problem here is that they haven't found it easy - to put it charitably - to talk about the institutional problem, to say that, yes, there were moments when we put the institutional interest above other interests.

INSKEEP: Pope Benedict, himself, has actually addressed this crisis, and he has an interesting way of phrasing it here. He says - and this is a quote: Now, under attack from the world, which talks to us of our sins, we can see that being able to do penance is a grace, and we see how necessary it is to do penance and thus, recognize what is wrong in our lives.

Even there, you have an acknowledgment of wrongdoing and a discussion of penance, but also describing himself as under attack.

Mr. DIONNE: I suppose if I had been an editor, I would have asked him, can you drop the first half? Because I think that part of the problem is that attacking the world first for bringing this to the church's attention undercuts the contrition in the second half. That is a very good statement that the church should make, and needs to make, I think, more strongly about itself as an institution.

But I think this is a case where the church could actually learn something from the modern world, in terms of accepting that the rage out there doesn't just come from enemies of the church. I think it doesn't even come, primarily, from enemies of the church. There are a lot of us out there who have lived our lives feeling great gratitude to the church. I feel great gratitude to nuns and priests who have been very important in my life.

And the sense of disappointment and anger among people who are part of the church, who are in the church, who are not enemies of the church, who don't carry around resentments of the church; those are the folks they need to talk to. And I think that when they talk about outside enemies, they're not talking to those people in the pews.

INSKEEP: Is rage a fair word for what you've felt from time to time?

Mr. DIONNE: Yeah, I have gone back and forth. I found it a very difficult period. Because as I say, you know, I feel gratitude towards the church. Early in the scandal, I wrote a column that began with the words: Some of my best friends are priests. And I wrote it because it was true; and I wrote it because, you know, the church, and a lot of individuals in it, have been very important to me, to the way I think, to the way I approach the world - the whole idea of God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him.

That's a really hopeful orientation toward life and it's affected, you know, a lot of things deep inside me that I'm not even aware of. And yet when you saw this, when you saw not only that people could do this to children, but also the tendency of the church to kind of push it aside, cover it up in those years - you know, back in the '80s and before - it was, at best, disappointing. And at worst, you asked, how could they do this?

INSKEEP: I wonder if it's especially hard for Catholics as opposed to people in other religions or other denominations of Christianity. If you are a Muslim, the imam is important, but he's not your conduit to God, necessarily. And if you're in certain branches of Christianity, the pastor has different levels of importance. But with Catholicism, the pope takes a paramount position.

Mr. DIONNE: The paradoxical thing about the Catholic Church is that it is structurally extremely centralized, but in actual practice, it's very decentralized. And I think lots of people stay with the church because they are part of the larger community and a larger tradition, but they are also part of smaller communities - particular parishes, particular priests and nuns, particular prayer groups. And so I think a lot of times when the institutional structure of the church fails them, or they believe it has failed them, they turn back on this group of people who grew out of the tradition and say, this is what the tradition is about. I have a very dear mother-in-law who is a very, very serious, wonderful Catholic, and who is as frustrated as anyone with these things. But she sort of can turn back to her inner faith as a personal matter, and to the community of people she has been part of for a very long time and say, that's what the church is really about.

INSKEEP: So, you have to separate your faith from the guys in the robes, basically.

Mr. DIONNE: Right. And I think that's good Catholic doctrine. I mean, the structure of the church is a human creation. The church teaches it's divinely inspired - you know, thou art Peter and upon this rock, I will build my church. But history tells us that there has been corruption in the church at various moments in history.

Indeed, the celibate priesthood - priests weren't always celibate. It was instituted as a barrier against corruption, passing on property to kids. So, the church has dealt with corruption for a long time.

Someone told me a story, recently, of a bishop or archbishop confronting a dictator who is persecuting the church. And according to the story, he looks at the dictator and said, look, we have done our best to destroy the church and we have failed. What makes you think you will succeed?

INSKEEP: Well, maybe that leads to the final question, then: Do you think that this is just one more scandal and any institution will have scandals, or that all these years of scandals add up to an earthquake that is in some way going to change the Catholic Church?

Mr. DIONNE: Well, I hope it does change the Catholic Church. You know, I would like the church to revisit the issue of an all-male, celibate priesthood. I don't expect that to happen soon and it won't be a cure-all for this, but I'd like at least to see an open debate about that. But more to the point, I think a lot of the solutions to this lie in the church's own preaching.

I think when they did the wrong thing, they were really operating on the imperatives of this world, listening to lawyers, listening to PR specialists, acting like...

INSKEEP: Deny, deny, deny.

Mr. DIONNE: ...any institution. Whereas, behaving like Christians says yes, we failed; yes, failure is something that happens to humans a lot. And we are genuinely committed to - as the church likes to say - a firm purpose of amendment. And so I hope that that can happen. And I think somehow it will, but sometimes, things take a long time in the Roman Catholic Church.

INSKEEP: E.J. Dionne is a columnist for the Washington Post, and a regular guest with David Brooks on our own ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. Good to see you.

Maureen Dowd, and, evidently her brother now, writes for the *New York Times*.

Times Topics: Roman Catholic Church

I'm a Catholic woman who makes a living being adversarial. We have a pope who has instructed Catholic women not to be adversarial.

It's a conundrum.

I've been wondering, given the vitriolic reaction of the New York archbishop to my column defending nuns and the dismissive reaction of the Vatican to my column denouncing the church's response to the pedophilia scandal, if they are able to take a woman's voice seriously. Some, like Bill Donohue of the Catholic League, seem to think women are trying to undermine the church because of abortion and women's ordination.

I thought they might respond better to a male Dowd.

My brother Kevin is conservative and devout — his hobby is collecting crèches — and has raised three good Catholic sons. When I asked him to share his thoughts on the scandal, I learned, shockingly, that we agreed on some things. He wrote the following:

“In pedophilia, the church has unleashed upon itself a plague that threatens its very future, and yet it remains in a curious state of denial. The church I grew up in was black and white, no grays. That's why my father, an Irish immigrant, liked it so much. The chaplain of the Police and Fire departments told me once ‘Your father was a fierce Catholic, very fierce.’

My brothers and I were sleepily at his side for the monthly 8 a.m. Holy Name Mass and the guarding of the Eucharist in the middle of the night during the 40-hour ritual at Easter. Once during a record snowstorm in 1958, we were marched single-file to church for Mass only to find out the priests next door couldn't get out of the rectory.

The priest was always a revered figure, the embodiment of Christ changing water into wine. (Older parishioners took it literally.) The altar boys would drink the dregs.

When I was in the 7th grade, one of the new priests took four of us to the drive-in restaurant and suggested a game of ‘pink belly’ on the way back; we pulled up a boy's shirt and slapped his belly until it was pink. When the new priest joined in, it seemed like more groping than slapping. But we thought it was inadvertent. And my parents never would have believed

a priest did anything inappropriate anyway. A boy in my class told me much later that the same priest climbed into bed with him in 1958 at a rectory sleepover, but my friend threw him to the floor. The priest protested he was sleepwalking. Three days later, the archbishop sent the priest to a rehab place in New Mexico; he ended up as a Notre Dame professor.

Vatican II made me wince. The church declared casual Friday. All the once-rigid rules left to the whim of the flock. The Mass was said in English (rendering useless my carefully learned Latin prayers). Holy days of obligation were optional. There were laypeople on the heretofore sacred ground of the altar — performing the sacraments and worse, handling the Host. The powerful symbolism of the priest turning the Host into the body of Christ cracked like an egg.

In his book, 'Goodbye! Good Men,' author Michael Rose writes that the liberalized rules set up a takeover of seminaries by homosexuals.

Vatican II liberalized rules but left the most outdated one: celibacy. That vow was put in place originally because the church did not want heirs making claims on money and land. But it ended up shrinking the priest pool and producing the wrong kind of candidates — drawing men confused about their sexuality who put our children in harm's way.

The church is dying from a thousand cuts. Its cover-up has cost a fortune and been a betrayal worthy of Judas. The money spent came from social programs, Catholic schools and the poor. This should be a sin that cries to heaven for vengeance. I asked a friend of mine recently what he would do if his child was molested after the church knew. 'I would probably kill someone,' he replied.

We must reassess. Married priests and laypeople giving the sacraments are not going to destroy the church. Based on what we have seen the last 10 years, they would be a bargain. It is time to go back to the disciplines that the church was founded on and remind our seminaries and universities what they are. (Georgetown University agreeing to cover religious symbols on stage to get President Obama to speak was not exactly fierce.)

The storm within the church strikes at what every Catholic fears most. We take our religion on faith. How can we maintain that faith when our leaders are unworthy of it?"

The following article can be found in its entirety at
<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/04/22/world/international-uk-pope->

[abuse.html?_r=1&emc=eta1](#)

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - Fallout from the Catholic child sex abuse scandal spread across Europe on Thursday as the Vatican retired an Irish bishop, a German offered to step down and prelates in England and Wales apologised for the "terrible crimes" of priests.

The following article can be found in its entirety at
http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-23-belgium-bishop-abuse_N.htm?csp=34&POE=click-refer

Belgian bishop resigns, apologizes for sexual abuse - USATODAY.com

This is my last posting for April. I will continue to pass along your articles and comments in two weeks. Please send them to tony@tonyercolano.com.

Please subscribe to *America* magazine, the *National Catholic Reporter* and the other periodicals which are referred to in this posting.