

A construction project to pursue over your Fourth of July weekend. Rodger Van Allen is a professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University.

U.S. CATHOLIC

How to build a better bishop

"I want you to get up right now, go to your windows, open them, and stick your head out and yell, 'I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore!'"

That famous exclamation from the Academy Award-winning film *Network* (1976) was likely in the hearts-if not exactly on the lips-of several thousand Catholics from around the country who gathered at Boston College in 2002 to pray and reflect on the first wave of shocking accounts of the sexual abuse of children by some of their own long-revered Catholic priests.

Now the anger is expressed most forcefully in Ireland, Germany, and elsewhere as the scandal has gone global.

The greatest Catholic anger, however, then and since, has been focused not so much on the priest perpetrators who are clearly sick, but on bishops who enabled this behavior by recycling these clergy to new assignments and new victims, covertly paid out hush money, and deceived the Catholic faithful.

How could one understand such behavior by Catholic bishops? Why was there no honest communication from them? Were they really allowed to make these secret payoffs? Why didn't they think about the victimized children, their parents, and the wider Catholic community? How did they get to be bishops anyhow? Why were laity excluded from decision-making?

As they sort out this list of questions, Catholic women and men reflect on their faith and their responsibility in meeting this ugly challenge. They were and are angry and hurt. Their faith, however, is still firm. "Keep the faith, but change the church!" has become their resolve in America, and church leadership should hope it goes that well elsewhere.

... Many Catholics have the impression that the ministry of bishop is currently as it always has been throughout history, perhaps even that Jesus intended bishops to be minor monarchs. But the role of bishop can be renewed to better serve the people of God. In that spirit, I propose four ways to renovate the bishop's office.

1. Selecting bishops

There is a broad-based chorus of voices calling for reform in the process for the selection of bishops. Papal biographer and theologian George Weigel has described the current process as "far too ingrown, with a troubled hierarchy having what seems to many an inordinate influence in shaping decisions about who will now be permitted to join the episcopal fraternity."

He calls it "a serious mistake" that laity are not involved in any significant way in the process and notes that "laypeople can see things that clergy may miss." Common sense suggests, says Weigel, that a more broadly consultative process would produce a more balanced assessment of the needs of a diocese and the qualifications of particular candidates. ...

2. Collaborative leadership

Another means of renovating the bishop's office is by implementing a more collaborative leadership structure and style. Pope John Paul II himself emphasized this when he met with a group of American bishops in 2004.

The late pope suggested that the church had historically found the resources for authentic self-renewal when it returned to its "origins in a conscious reappropriation of the apostolic tradition and a purifying re-evaluation of her institutions in light of the gospel." He said that "in the present circumstances of the church in America, this will entail a spiritual discernment and critique of certain styles of governance, which, even in the name of a legitimate concern for good 'administration' and responsible oversight, can run the risk of distancing the pastor from the members of the flock, and obscuring his image as their father and brother in Christ."

Quoting the Synod of Bishops 2003 document *Pastores Gregis* and its acknowledgement for the need today for each bishop to develop "a pastoral style that is ever more open to collaboration with all," he said that a commitment to creating better structures of participation, consultation, and shared responsibility "should not be misunderstood as a concession to a secular 'democratic' model of governance, but as an intrinsic requirement of the exercise of episcopal authority and a necessary means of strengthening that authority."

Unfortunately, some clergy and bishops may have learned lessons of excluding laity through their notions of what happened under the lay trustee system in early American Catholic history.

...

3. Financial matters

A third needed renovation is through an effective system of checks and balances in financial matters. Robert McClory's article "Collection Racket" in the May 2009 issue of this magazine addressed this issue in regard to parishes. Bishops, too, need financial checks and balances, transparency, and accountability. Historian Charles Morris found in his research that most dioceses didn't even have financial statements until quite recently. ...

4. Protocol and lifestyle

A final renovation concerns episcopal protocol and lifestyle. James O'Toole's description of "the O'Connell century" notes that in Boston and elsewhere "archbishops cultivated an imperial, even imperious, style of leadership." Some were very taken with their princely status. Cardinal O'Connell caused a stir in 1911 when he insisted on being ranked ahead of the governor of Massachusetts at a formal dinner. "A governor was just a governor, after all, and [O'Connell] was a prince," writes O'Toole.

Philadelphia's Cardinal Dougherty in 1936 purchased an estate called the Terraces for \$115,000. At the time a newly constructed home could be purchased for \$5,000. The Terraces had 16 rooms, five baths, a pool, a stable, and a garage for six cars. Dougherty spent a further \$100,000 building a new limestone front and a number of new rooms. Historian Charles Morris states that "none of this would be shocking if Dougherty were an oil baron, but he was a Catholic bishop, spending blue-collar donations during a national economic crisis."

Contemporary bishops have inherited these baronial episcopal residences, but a change from the past has begun. In 2004 the Italianate cardinal's residence that was built by Boston's Cardinal O'Connell was sold by Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley. He seems to have heard the advice of laity like Richard Santagati, the president of Merrimack College, who advised O'Malley that he could "reach out to the Catholic community by choosing a lifestyle that is different from the past."

... We now have an opportunity to move from anger toward constructive change that can help renew the church. The renovations I have proposed in the bishop's office involve some changes

for the whole community. Let us keep the faith as we together undertake these and all our needed renovations, both institutional and personal.

The full article is available at <http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2010/06/how-build-better-bishop>

What follows is a special message from filmmaker and Pax Christi USA member Bud Ryan.

As many of you know Stuart Overbey (the director) and myself have finished our anti-nuclear documentary, "The Forgotten Bomb," after 3 years working on the project. We have submitted the film to 5 film festivals -- Toronto, Venice, AFI, Telluride & the Hampton's and hopefully we will get accepted by at least one of them where we will (again hopefully) get a distribution deal.

Right now as we wait to hear from the festivals that we have submitted to (we should hear by mid-August), we are trying to promote the film in any way we can. One of the ways we are promoting the movie is by starting a Facebook page which you can get to by [clicking here](#).

On the Facebook page, we have the trailer, production stills and a news story from Nagasaki TV from when we were there in December of 2007 filming. We will soon be posting a 2nd Nagasaki TV news story that was broadcast during our trip.

The reason for this email is Stuart and I are asking for your help in trying to get on the Oprah Winfrey show. If you click on the link below, it should take you to a form that asks you who you would like to see on Oprah's show. We are asking you to PLEASE fill out the form and tell them that you would like to see Stuart Overbey (director, editor, producer) and Bud Ryan (executive producer, co-director, writer) on the show.

At the bottom of the form for guests you'd like to see on the Oprah show, it says: "Tell Us Your Story." There is a 2000 characters-limit, so you don't have to include all the info I've supplied below, but please minimally include:

- Our names, Bud Ryan and Stuart Overbey
- Our website, <http://www.forgottenbomb.com>
- And some of the people we've interviewed and places we visited (see below)
- You might also mention that because of President Obama's 2009 Prague speech about nuclear weapons, the NPT Review Conference in May, Russian-U.S. talks on nukes, and more, our film is very timely.

When you fill out the form, please include the website so they can access the trailer; you might also mention or provide a link to the Facebook page.

People we interviewed for the film:

- George Shultz, former Secretary of State for Ronald Reagan
- Jonathan Schell, author of the million-selling book about the consequences of nuclear war, *The Fate of the Earth*
- Gar Alperovitz, author of *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*
- Hibakusha (bomb survivors) from both Hiroshima & Nagasaki
- Joni Arends, Director of the nuclear watchdog group Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

- Steve Leeper, Director of the Hiroshima Peace Foundation
- Jim Douglass, peace activist and author of *JFK and the Unspeakable*
- Dr. Ivan Oelrich, Federation of American Scientists
- Dr. Mike McCally, Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Dr. George Cowan, Manhattan Project Scientist
- John Burroughs, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Safety
- Yvonne Morris, Director of the Titan Missile Museum
- Carletta Garcia, former uranium miner
- Rabbi Michael Lerner, peace activist and founder and publisher of Tikkun magazine
- Fr. John Dear, Jesuit priest, peace activist and author
- Barbara Rose Johnston, author of *The Consequential Damages of Nuclear War*
- Roshi Joan Halifax, Buddhist peace activist
- Dave Robinson, Executive Director of Pax Christi USA, the Catholic peace organization
- Jim Winkler, General Secretary, United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
- Lincoln Grahls, atomic veteran and author

During filming, we visited:

- Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan
- New York
- Washington, D.C.
- San Francisco
- Las Vegas
- Tucson, AZ
- Various places in New Mexico

Stuart and I thank you for your help.

PAZI!

Bud Ryan

Katherine Barney from Worthing, Sussex, asked John Shelby Spong:

Can you help me to understand the movement in American politics that you call "The Tea Party"?

Dear Katherine:

I can try, but in a question and answer format it must, of necessity, be brief.

The Tea Party Movement is a manifestation of the great fear and anxiety that, today, accompanies Western politics everywhere. This anxiety is also present in Greece, France, Germany and Iceland, but since they did not have the Boston Tea Party in their national history they do not call it that.

It was born in the economic crisis that rocked this country in the last year of the Bush Administration, when the politics of greed finally brought Wall Street to its knees. It was fed by the healthcare debate, when lobbyists were paid to frighten the American public with distortions, half truths and absolute lies in an attempt to prevent the profits of healthcare companies, trial lawyers, drug manufacturers and private medical practitioners from being compromised. It also has in it an element of racism as the white Anglo-Saxon portion of our population began to see

a multi-ethnic America coming into being and to feel that they were losing the power to impose their agenda on this emerging society in the way that they had always done in the past. It has within it a traditional fear of big and intrusive government, which is as old as our ancestors' reasons for migrating from Europe in the first place. The Tea Party Movement represents an inability on the part of many of our citizens to embrace our interdependent population that is now tempering the "rugged individualism" which was part of our past.

I believe that the movement will also prove to be little more than a momentary blip on the EKG chart of American history and will soon fade back into the woodwork, as the economy returns to normal, the ill-advised wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are brought to a close, the BP oil leak is finally plugged, the damage it has done to our environment is addressed, and when people finally accept the fact that a new America is emerging and that it represents a rising consciousness and a new vision of what it means to be human. This new version will then equip us to arrive at the time when we will celebrate our diversity rather than coddle our fears.

The Tea Party Movement will also almost inadvertently serve to drive us back to that biblical idea that we are indeed our brothers' and our sisters' keepers and that the humanity in each of us is ultimately dependent on recognizing the humanity in all of us. That is in fact what the Pentecost story in the Book of Acts is all about, the dawning of universalism that lifts us out of our tribal limitations.

John Chuchman supplied the following reflection and poem.

Richard Rohr's *The Naked Now* urges me not to let my disappointments and frustrations with the faults and failures of institutional church overwhelm me or dominate my thinking or writing. Although he acknowledges that we must speak out and stand up against the abuses we witness, he cautions against letting the negatives possess us. *The Naked Now* encourages us to move away from either/or and in/out or good/bad thinking towards a *both/and* mentality saying in essence, *Everything Belongs!*

But every time I have begun moving away from all the negatives associated with church hierarchy, etc, moving towards all the positives associated with *Transformation/Metanoia* and Spiritual Growth, one or more of you reacts with words of support/affirmation regarding my speaking out and taking a stand against hierarchical abuse, thus drawing me back into the fray. How do we prevent our Grief with the Institution from blocking our Spiritual Growth?

The Church: It must die to be transformed!

I think I'll give up
fighting for
Transparency and Accountability
by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

I'd be doing so,
not only because
the good ole boys running it likely never will give up
their good ole boys club
or because
I'm not sure true Transparency and Accountability exist
or are even possible

in any major hierarchical organization
in the world today.

I just wonder if
expending time, effort, and energy
on the issue of Church governance
makes sense
if we are witnessing the demise of Catholicism
as an organization.

As self-proclaimed followers of Jesus Christ,
perhaps we need return
to the organizational structure
He established;
none.

It seems he preached and lived,
not an organizational structure,
but an attitude,
a way of living.

It is indeed tragic
that instead of helping people of ALL religions
grow in their Faiths,
Catholicism has been turned into
just another competing ism,
just another competing organization.

I think I'm just going to help
Hospice the Church,
help it to die (as an organization) with dignity
while ministering to all those
(including myself)
who grieve its loss,
while taking joy
in its
transformation
from an organization
back into a Christ-like attitude
of Love
and Compassion,
a Way of Living.

Just like the efforts of family members
unwilling to face the loss of a loved one,
futilely expending resources
trying to prolong life,
my efforts directed at
keeping the Catholic Church alive
as an organization,
may be well-intentioned

but misguided
and wasteful.

It must die to be transformed.

We have not figured out
how to make any major hierarchical organization
fully Transparent and Accountable,
least of all the Catholic Church
as the world's last feudal monarchy,
and continued efforts to try and do so
may well detract me
from living the life and message
of Jesus.

I guess I'm ready to switch
rather than fight.

Salvatore forwarded the following poem from Charley Wilks.

For Those Who Resist Change

Change is the universe breathing.
Even when painful,
not chosen,
beyond comprehension
change eventually means new life.
Embrace change like a new baby
and wait for its surprises.

When stifled in a self
change gives way to old life,
losing its direction
toward the tomorrow
that change is relentlessly creating.
Do not stop the process;
Accept the moment,
and what it brings;
breathe with the universe.

Change is the universe expanding.
Every self is a universe
whose expansions,
as with the universe itself,
are ever toward the wholeness
that every change is seeking.

Change is the universe breathing.

Laurie Goodstein and David M. Halbfinger write for the *New York Times*. Rachel Donadio contributed reporting from Rome.

The full article is available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/europe/02pope.html>

Church Office Failed to Act on Abuse Scandal

In its long struggle to grapple with sexual abuse, the Vatican often cites as a major turning point the decision in 2001 to give the office led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger the authority to cut through a morass of bureaucracy and handle abuse cases directly.

The decision, in an apostolic letter from Pope John Paul II, earned Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, a reputation as the Vatican insider who most clearly recognized the threat the spreading sexual abuse scandals posed to the Roman Catholic Church.

But church documents and interviews with canon lawyers and bishops cast that 2001 decision and the future pope's track record in a new and less flattering light.

The Vatican took action only after bishops from English-speaking nations became so concerned about resistance from top church officials that the Vatican convened a secret meeting to hear their complaints — an extraordinary example of prelates from across the globe collectively pressing their superiors for reform, and one that had not previously been revealed.

And the policy that resulted from that meeting, in contrast to the way it has been described by the Vatican, was not a sharp break with past practices. It was mainly a belated reaffirmation of longstanding church procedures that at least one bishop attending the meeting argued had been ignored for too long, according to church documents and interviews.

The office led by Cardinal Ratzinger, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had actually been given authority over sexual abuse cases nearly 80 years earlier, in 1922, documents show and canon lawyers confirm. But for the two decades he was in charge of that office, the future pope never asserted that authority, failing to act even as the cases undermined the church's credibility in the United States, Australia, Ireland and elsewhere.

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, an outspoken auxiliary bishop emeritus from Sydney, Australia, who attended the secret meeting in 2000, said that despite numerous warnings, top Vatican officials, including Benedict, took far longer to wake up to the abuse problems than many local bishops did.

"Why did the Vatican end up so far behind the bishops out on the front line, who with all their faults, did change — they did develop," he said. "Why was the Vatican so many years behind?"

Cardinal Ratzinger, of course, had not yet become pope, a divinely ordained office not accustomed to direction from below. John Paul, his longtime superior, often dismissed allegations of pedophilia by priests as an attack on the church by its enemies. Supporters say that Cardinal Ratzinger would have preferred to take steps earlier to stanch the damage in certain cases.

But the future pope, it is now clear, was also part of a culture of nonresponsibility, denial, legalistic foot-dragging and outright obstruction. More than any top Vatican official other than John Paul, it was Cardinal Ratzinger who might have taken decisive action in the 1990s to prevent the scandal from metastasizing in country after country, growing to such proportions that it now threatens to consume his own papacy.

... National bishops' conferences in some countries have adopted their own norms and standards. But several decades after sexual abuse by priests became a problem, Benedict has not yet instituted a universal set of rules.

Scandal and Confusion

The sexual abuse scandal first caught much of the world's attention in 2002, with reports that the Boston archdiocese had been covering up for molesters for years. But the alarm bells had already been sounding for nearly two decades in many countries. In Lafayette, La., in 1984, the Rev. Gilbert Gauthé admitted to molesting 37 youngsters. In 1989, a sensational case erupted at an orphanage in the Canadian province of Newfoundland. By the mid-1990s, about 40 priests and brothers in Australia faced abuse allegations. In 1994, the Irish government was brought down when it botched the extradition of a notorious pedophile priest.

Bishops had a variety of disciplinary tools at their disposal — including the power to remove accused priests from contact with children and to suspend them from ministry altogether — that they could use without the Vatican's direct approval.

Some used this authority to sideline abusive priests, minimizing the damage inflicted on their victims. Other bishops clearly made things worse, by shuffling abusers from one assignment to the next, never telling parishioners or reporting priests to the police.

But as court cases, financial settlements and media coverage mounted, many prelates looked to the Vatican for leadership and clarity on how to prosecute abusers under canon law and when to bring cases to the attention of the civil authorities. In the worst cases, involving serial offenders who denied culpability and resisted discipline, some bishops sought the Vatican's guidance on how to dismiss them from the priesthood.

For this, bishops needed the Vatican's help. Dismissing a priest is not like disbaring a lawyer or stripping a doctor of his medical license. In Catholic theology, ordaining a priest creates an indelible mark; to return him to the lay state required the approval of the pope.

Yet throughout the '80s and '90s, bishops who sought to penalize and dismiss abusive priests were daunted by a bewildering bureaucratic and canonical legal process, with contradicting laws and overlapping jurisdictions in Rome, according to church documents and interviews with bishops and canon lawyers. ...

... After the new procedures were adopted, Cardinal Ratzinger's office became more responsive to requests to discipline priests, said bishops who sought help from his office. But when the sexual abuse scandal erupted again, in Boston in 2002, it immediately became clear to American bishops that the new procedures were inadequate.

Meeting in Dallas in the summer of 2002, the American bishops adopted a stronger set of canonical norms requiring bishops to report all criminal allegations to the secular authorities, and to permanently remove from ministry priests facing even one credible accusation of abuse. They also sought from the Vatican a streamlined way to discipline priests that would not require a drawn-out canonical trial.

The Vatican initially rejected the American bishops' proposed norms. A committee of American bishops and Vatican officials, including Cardinal Ratzinger's deputy, watered down the

American mandatory-reporting requirement to say only that bishops must comply with civil laws on reporting crimes, which vary widely from place to place.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reserved for itself the power to dismiss a man from the priesthood without a full canonical trial — the kind of administrative remedy that American bishops had long been begging the Vatican to delegate to them.

Even so, the American bishops got most of what they asked for, and Cardinal Ratzinger was their advocate, said Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, then the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Americans were allowed to keep their zero-tolerance provision for abusive priests, making the rules for the church in the United States far more stringent than in most of the rest of the world. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith also said it would waive the statute of limitations on a case-by-case basis if bishops asked.

Archbishop Gregory said he made 13 trips to Rome in three years, almost always meeting with Cardinal Ratzinger.

“He was extraordinarily supportive of what we were doing,” Archbishop Gregory said in an interview.

Other reforms enacted by American bishops included requiring background checks for church personnel working with children, improved screening of seminarians, training in recognizing abuse, annual compliance audits in each diocese and lay review boards to advise bishops on how to deal with abuse cases.

Those measures seem to be having an impact. Last year, according to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 513 people made allegations of sexual abuse against 346 priests or other church officials, roughly a third fewer cases than in 2008.

Yet the Vatican did not proactively apply those policies to other countries, and it is only now grappling with abuse problems elsewhere. ... Benedict, now five years into his papacy, has yet to make clear if he intends to demand of bishops throughout the world — and of his own Curia — that all priests who committed abuse and bishops who abetted it must be punished.

As the crisis has mushroomed internationally this year, some cardinals in the Vatican have continued to blame the news media and label the criticism anti-Catholic persecution. Benedict himself has veered from defensiveness to contrition, saying in March that the faithful should not be intimidated by “the petty gossip of dominant opinion” — and then in May telling reporters that “the greatest persecution of the church does not come from the enemies outside, but is born from the sin in the church.”

The Vatican, moreover, has never made it mandatory for bishops around the world to report molesters to the civil authorities, or to alert parishes and communities where the abusive priests worked — information that often propels more victims to step forward. (Vatican officials caution that a reporting requirement could be dangerous in dictatorships and countries where the church is already subject to persecution.)

It was only in April that the Vatican posted “guidelines” on its Web site saying that church officials should comply with civil laws on reporting abuse. But those are recommendations, not requirements.

Today, a debate is roiling the Vatican, pitting those who see the American zero-tolerance norms as problematic because they lack due process for accused priests, against those who want to change canon law to make it easier to penalize and dismiss priests.

Where Benedict lies on this spectrum, even after nearly three decades of handling abuse cases, is still an open question.

Please continue to forward your comments and articles (and poems) to tony@tonyercolano.com