

We begin with a letter from Fr. Thomas Doyle, which was published on the ARCC Web site. This letter addresses the worldwide child abuse scandal, which is affecting the Roman Catholic Church, from Doyle's inside perspective.

Not long after my New Year's Day Reflections were published I received a message from a friend who passed on to me some reactions to my short essay. I had planned on a response shortly after but time moved faster than I. Although nearly three months have passed the issue burns now more intensely than ever!

First, one reader said he was disturbed that I had accused every bishop of neglect. Actually I did not accuse any bishop of anything. I related my personal experience and in that experience I found no instance the list of bishops who have proven themselves by placing victims above image is short...very short. As of this date I can count only three: Bishop Tom Gumbleton of Detroit, Bishop Geoff Robinson of Melbourne, Australia and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin. For their efforts both Tom Gumbleton and Geoff Robinson were disciplined by the Vatican. Archbishop Martin is still going, no doubt protected from the Vatican vindictiveness by the world-wide revelations of clergy sexual abuse that have recently sprung up. There may be other bishops elsewhere who have responded to victims with care and compassion and made them the first priority. I simply have not had any firsthand experience of it nor have I heard of any such response from survivors in the U.S., England, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand or Australia with the exception of the three mentioned above.

A lot of Catholics find this hard to believe and the prospect that it may be even slightly true, very disturbing. They seem more upset at the disappointing news that most bishops don't care than they are over the wholesale spiritual slaughter of the innocent victims.

Why? That is the question that keeps burning. Many have voiced the opinion that a secret directive from the Vatican is behind what certainly appears to be a uniform pattern of behavior. Personally I doubt it. I have never seen any evidence that would lead me to suspect that any secret orders had gone out either recently or in the past. The much commented on Vatican document *Crimen sollicitationis* isn't evidence of secret orders or a conspiracy. It's proof of something far worse....a deeply entrenched *policy*. A number of very reputable scholars have studied the entire Catholic clergy abuse phenomenon in search of believable answers to *why* the hierarchy has acted as they have. I have read most if not all of the studies, articles, books and other results of the research. The theory that seems to be the most credible and realistic is that the reason lies in the clerical culture which forms priests and bishops.

This culture is real and not an exaggeration or a myth. I was part of it for

almost forty years. The institutional Catholic Church is essentially a monarchy. The pope has absolute power. All real leadership roles in the Church are held by celibate, male clerics. There may be a smattering of lay people, men and women, here and there but they have no power and the way things are going these days with the frenzied rush backwards into the 1950's, those few lay people who have jobs may well find themselves on the outside looking in.

There are numerous reasons, actually excuses, for restricting all power to priests and bishops but the fundamental one is the official belief that a priest is a cut above lay people because he is, in the words of John Paul II, *configured to Christ*...whatever that means. Clerics base their power on this special union with Christ and the clerical culture bases its power on the belief that the institutional Church is *the Church* and was created with a hierarchical structure by God Himself. The fact that there is no solid scriptural or historic evidence for this has never had a bearing on the fact that the hierarchy insists that every Catholic must believe it and act accordingly. The Vatican council reintroduced the ancient teaching of the Church as *The People of God*. Yet even before the council ended the Vatican curia and not a small number of bishops began the process of dismantling this teaching because it seriously threatened the immense power base of the curia and the bishops. A number of reputable theologians and historians and not a few ordinary Catholics are convinced that John Paul II led the process of *restoration*....that is, a retreat from the Conciliar spirit back to the good old days when the Church was a kingdom and the laity did what they were told, kept their mouths shut and their checkbooks open.

Going a step further, the bishops believe they are absolutely essential to the existence of the Church, i.e., the institution. They believe that the Higher Power *does not want* democracy, even though that appears to have been a concept that motivated Jesus Christ. The bishops are taught that they are chosen by the Holy Spirit and once consecrated; they are the official teachers of the Church. This of course can easily lead to what some psychologists refer to as *acquired situational narcissism* which in turn breeds the magical thinking that "*I am omniscient, unaccountable, ten feet tall and bullet proof.*" All of this explains the initial reaction to reports of clergy sex abuse which is to defend the institution and the bishops at all cost. The bishops *are* the institution which is *the church*. Protecting and shielding the bishops is tantamount to protecting the Church.

One reader said something insightful and probably true: "*Are the bishops just normal people who are drawn into a culture of tyranny, which at the same time elevates and enslaves them?*" He also said that "*bishops are chosen from among priests who completely lack any sense of individuality and personal responsibility. And so they blindly protect the institution and its assets.*" I surely don't have all the answers and probably don't have many but I think this man's ideas are worth adding to the list of plausible reasons. Take a look at how the Church operates. Historically in the seminary those

aspirants to the priesthood who were docile, obedient, asexual and pious were deemed the right kind of future priest. Those who had some spirit of individuality, asked questions, didn't fit the stereotypical model of piety and didn't believe that celibacy was necessarily a higher calling often ended up as *former* seminarians. Don't get me wrong. I am *not* saying that every priest matched the description of the clerical drone in the seminary and carried it through to the priesthood. In my life the priests who lived their priesthood not as robots for the monarchy but as vibrant ministers of Christ have been the majority and have also been the ones who have been instrumental in salvaging any semblance of the Church as the People of God.

Before I leave this topic I'd like to offer a quote from *A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church*, the very interesting autobiography of Archbishop Rembert Weakland. Midway through the book he recounts a conversation he had with Msgr. Justin Rigali (now a Cardinal....*good behavior!!*) who at that time (1978) worked in the Vatican and was the pope's chief interpreter of the American Church. Basically, Rigali was telling the newly appointed Archbishop Weakland how to be a good bishop: "*His advice to me was unequivocal and could be summed up as follows: I should seek to follow clearly in all matters the Holy Father's mind as seen through the documents of the curia and conform myself to them for the sake of unity in the Church's teaching body or magisterium; I should demonstrate absolute loyalty to the Holy See and inculcate such loyalty in my people; I should become a paragon of doctrinal orthodoxy in my teaching and writings, relying principally on the teachings of the pope and the curia. In this way my diocese and the Church in the United States would be unified and strong.*" (p. 240). It doesn't take much imagination to draw parallels between this astounding definition of how to be a good Catholic, with similar mindsets in several less than honorable governments from recent history. Suffice it to say that this attitude is deeply engrained in bishops and priests everywhere. It aptly sums up the criteria used to evaluate candidates for the office of bishop. The pathetic collection of mitred wonders in the U.S. is clear evidence that the monarchy must be shored up at all cost....and the *Body of Christ* deflated and abandoned.

The most common response to revelations of sex abuse of the vulnerable by priests has been denial and blame-shifting soaked in narcissistic arrogance. The Vatican and the bishops simply don't get it! In the early nineties the Pope and his talking heads all distanced themselves by proclaiming that this was an *American* problem and a salient cause was materialism, secularism and hedonism. Some of the more psychotic rantings blamed it on the wholesale refusal to obey the 1968 birth control encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. That was *circa* 1993. Then Ireland exploded with the Brendan Smyth affair in 1994. In 1995 one of John Paul II's favorite cardinals, Hans Hermann Groer of Vienna was exposed and had to resign. The revelations continued over the years. The U.S. bishops organized their defense against the victims, treating them to deceitful pronouncements about how caring they are

while at the same time doing everything in their power to avoid any accountability. Their true colors are obvious...they are afraid to reach out to victims, incapable of comprehending the horror of it all and equally incapable of any form of spiritual healing.

The bishops in the U.S. and elsewhere regularly pontificate that *they* have made the world safer for children and *they* have handled the sex abuse crisis in such a superlative way that it's now over. The power of the papacy and the episcopacy to change reality and re-write history appears to be waning! Over the past few months what some predicted was inevitable has happened. May, 2009 — The *Ryan Report* reveals systemic torture and sexual abuse in Ireland's Church-run orphanages and child-care institutions. November 2009 – The *Murphy Report* exposes the culture of abuse, denial and dishonesty in Dublin; February-March, 2010 – revelations of clergy sex abuse in *Austria, the Netherlands, Germany* and.....*The Vatican!*

All the pope has to offer is talk...more words, more meetings, more silly press releases and the promise of a special pastoral letter. The "problem" is not going to be fixed by the pope, the bishops or anyone who works for the institutional Church. Why? Because they *are* the problem. The light at the end of the long tunnel will remain way out of reach until the very system that produced the dysfunctional clerics and their equally dysfunctional bishops is ended and somehow replaced with not another monarchy but something that one can readily identify with the *Body of Christ*.

Tony Equale offers a response to Father Doyle.

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your passionate declamation. You rightly focus on "clerical culture." You refer to your 40 year experience. It might not be irrelevant to point out that *any human being* when treated with the deference, honor and privilege accorded priests will tend cling to those "goodies." Those little items are, after all, the unspoken goals of most careers. Who would turn their back on them in favor of the insecurities and social disapprobation that come with being a "spoiled priest." The clerical culture, like privilege anywhere, is going to be protected by any means necessary Nothing extraordinary there.

You fail to emphasize that the ideological *armamentarium* marshalled to protect these privileges is not a matter of a club conspiracy recently hatched in a smoke filled back room. These privileges are set in granite in the *de fide* definitions of the Church that go back 1600 years. Shall we go through the list? ... Papal infallibility ... the condemnation of conciliarism ... apostolic succession ... the monarchical

episcopate ... the seal of ordination ... the restriction of authentic performance of the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance to the priest alone ... the *ex opere operato* effect of sacramental performance ... mandatory celibacy These doctrines are what distinguish Catholics from Protestants ...

Your list of grievances about the outrageous performance of the members of the clerical culture is so devastating, overwhelming and condemnatory, that one must ask ... why is this guy still in this organization? There have to be reasons that go beyond rational moral considerations. It might be understandable that someone might join an organization before he understands how pathological it is, but once it becomes clear that (1) moral behavior and the protection of children is not any kind of *ultimate value* for church authorities and (2) that the "cover-up" mentality actually comes from ancient doctrinal distortions that are considered above criticism and change, how can one remain there ... and not only as a member, but one of the elite himself?

I guess you realize I am referring to you. Now before you take this as a personal attack, hear what I am saying. Has it ever occurred to you that the same reasons why you will not leave the Church are the very same reasons why the hierarchy acts the way it does? I think that is what has to change.

The Catholic believes that the Church is a divine institution, willed in its present form by "God" himself, and deserving of all obedience and protection. ***The Catholic Church cannot change. In all but the rarest cases there is nothing humanly rational about being Catholic.*** And by the same token the hierarchy, many of whom are younger than we are, not long ago sat at desks like all of us, overwhelmed with the prestige of Augustine and Constantine, Aquinas and Bellarmine, and the universal colonial world that was conquered in the name of that tradition. Two millennia of survival is impressive.

At the end of your diatribe you call for radical change that will undermine clerical arrogance and self-serving. I couldn't agree more. But do you know what you are asking? You are asking for the Church to abandon 1600 years of dogma *de fide definita* and the inalienable divinity that they presuppose and project. You are asking for the derogation of papal infallibility ... the monarchical episcopate ... and all the rest of the above list. ... ultimately the very divine foundation of the church. You must realize, ***you are asking the Church to stop being Catholic.***

You must also have noticed, that little list of offending doctrines were themselves the object of attack in the early 16th century and their elimination created a version of Christianity that we know as "protestant." So christians have "been there, done that." They couldn't change the Church. Why do you think you can accomplish what they couldn't? At very least you should feel encouraged by their example and inspired by their tactics, and their ultimate recourse before an intransigent Vatican was ***schism***. The authorities taught us schism was unthinkable. I'm suggesting it is the only way out of the impasse you describe.

Is there perhaps something in your stance and in the stance of so many that prevents you from considering **radical action** from within the Church ... ? Do you also consider these "problem doctrines" *de fide*, sacrosanct and therefore unchangeable ... ? Do you perhaps believe in the monarchical episcopate and the infallibility of the Pope so that you will forever remain reduced to **begging the authorities** to allow you to obey "God"? Are you yourself convinced of the unique powers of the priesthood ... the automatic vending machine effects of the sacraments ... and your own personal possession of the *sigillum*, so that you cannot even contemplate the one and only tactic that will make them move ... *disregarding them ... ignoring them ... autonomous action ... SCHISM!* It made the Vatican negotiate with Lefevre! It's a tactic we have been brain-washed to think is too heinous to contemplate.

Have you been convinced, like so many of us formed in the Irish-Catholic northeast that to stop being Catholic is to stop being Irish or Polish or Italian and become some version of "protestant" ... English or German ... *and risk going to hell to boot?* In other words, are you so irrationally "Catholic" that you have no choice of tactics but **eternally to beg the authorities** to give you what you have a right to?

My thesis is this, very simply: you cannot be "Catholic" as they have defined it and expect any reform that does not come exclusively from the top down. And conversely, if you want the changes you demand, it is going to have to be done without their permission **because they will never grant permission for the erosion of the ancient doctrinal base that necessarily produces Catholic clerical privilege.** If you do it without their permission, you may be obeying "God" and your conscience, you may be following the example of Christ and saving children, but you will have to give up being "Catholic."

Hey, it's lent ... you gotta give up something! Why not your chains?

Father Hans Küng calls for a change of attitude.

Ratzinger's Responsibility

After Archbishop Robert Zollitsch's recent papal audience, he spoke of Pope Benedict's "great shock" and "profound agitation" over the many cases of abuse which are coming to light. Zollitsch, archbishop of Freiburg, Germany, and the chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, asked pardon of the victims and spoke again about the measures that have already been taken or will soon be taken. But neither he nor the pope has addressed the real question that can no longer be put aside.

According to the latest Emnid-poll, only 10 percent of those interviewed in Germany believe that the church is doing enough in dealing with this scandal; on the contrary, 86 percent charge the church's leadership with insufficient willingness to come to grips with the problem. The bishops' denial that there is any connection between the celibacy rule and the abuse problem can only confirm their criticism.

1st Question: Why does the pope continue to assert that what he calls "holy" celibacy is a "precious gift", thus ignoring the biblical teaching that explicitly permits and even encourages marriage for all office holders in the Church? Celibacy is not "holy"; it is not even "fortunate"; it is "unfortunate", for it excludes many perfectly good candidates from the priesthood and forces numerous priests out of their office, simply because they want to marry. The rule of celibacy is not a truth of faith, but a church law going back to the 11th Century; it should have been abolished already in the 16th Century, when it was trenchantly criticized by the Reformers.

Honesty demands that the pope, at the very least, promise to rethink this rule -- something the vast majority of the clergy and laity have wanted for a long time now. Both Alois Glück, the president of the Central Committee of the German Catholics and Hans-Jochen Jaschke, auxiliary bishop of Hamburg, have called for a less uptight attitude towards sexuality and for the coexistence of celibate and married priests in the church

2nd Question: Is it true, as Archbishop Zollitsch insists, that "all the experts" agree that abuse of minors by clergymen and the celibacy rule have nothing to do with each other? How can he claim to know the opinions of "all the experts"? In fact, there are numerous psychotherapists and psychoanalysts who see a connection here. The celibacy law obliges the priest to abstain from all forms of sexual activity, though their sexual impulses remain virulent, and thus the danger exists that these impulses might be shifted into a taboo zone and compensated for in abnormal ways.

Honesty demands that we take the correlation between abuse and celibacy seriously. The American psychotherapist Richard Sipe has clearly demonstrated, on the basis of a 25 year study published in 2004 under the title *Knowledge of sexual activity and abuse within the clerical system of the Roman Catholic church*, that the celibate way of life can indeed reinforce pedophile tendencies, especially when the socialization leading to it, i.e. adolescence and young adulthood spent in minor and major seminary cut off from the normal experiences of their peer groups, is taken into account. In his study, Sipe found retarded psycho-sexual development occurring more frequently in celibate clerics than in the average population. And often, such deficits in psychological development and sexual tendencies only become evident after ordination.

3rd Question: Instead of merely asking pardon of the victims of abuse, should not the bishops at last admit their own share of blame? For decades, they have not only tabooed the celibacy issue but also systematically covered up cases of abuse with the mantle of strictest secrecy, doing little more than re-assigning the perpetrators to new ministries. In a statement of March 16, Bishop Ackermann of Trier, special delegate of the German Bishops' Conference for sexual abuse cases, publicly acknowledged the existence of such a cover-up, but characteristically he put the blame not on the church as institution, but rather on the individual perpetrators and the false considerations of their superiors. Protection of their priests and the reputation of the church was evidently more important to the bishops than protection of minors. Thus, there is an important difference between the *individual* cases of abuse surfacing in schools outside the Catholic church and the *systematic* and

correspondingly more frequent cases of abuse within the Catholic church, where, now as before, an uptight, rigoristic sexual morality prevails, that finds its culmination in the law of celibacy.

Honesty demands that the chairman of the German Bishops' Conference should have clearly and definitively announced, that, in the future, the hierarchy will cease to deal with cases of criminal acts committed by those in the service of the church by circumventing the state system of justice. Can it be that the hierarchy here in Germany will only wake up when it is confronted with demands for reparation payments in terms of millions of dollars? In the United States, the Catholic church had to pay some \$1.3 billion alone in 2006; in Ireland, the government helped the religious orders set up a compensation fund with a ruinous sum of \$2.8 billion. Such sums say much more about the dimensions of the problem than the pooh-poohing statistics about the small percentage of celibate clergy among the general population of abusers.

4th Question: Is it not time for Pope Benedict XVI himself to acknowledge his share of responsibility, instead of whining about a campaign against his person? No other person in the Church has had to deal with so many cases of abuse crossing his desk. Here are some reminders:

- In his eight years as a professor of theology in Regensburg, in close contact with his brother Georg, the capellmeister of the Regensburger Domspatzen, Ratzinger can hardly have been ignorant about what went on in the choir and its boarding--school. This was much more than an occasional slap in the face, there are charges of serious physical violence and even sexual abuse.
- In his five years as Archbishop of Munich, repeated cases of sexual abuse at least by one priest transferred to his Archdiocese have come to light. His loyal Vicar General, my classmate Gerhard Gruber, has taken full responsibility for the handling of this case, but that is hardly an excuse for the Archbishop, who is ultimately responsible for the administration of his diocese.
- In his 24 years as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, from around the world, all cases of grave sexual offences by clerics had to be reported, under strictest secrecy ("secretum pontificum"), to his curial office, which was exclusively responsible for dealing with them. Ratzinger himself, in a letter on "grave sexual crimes" addressed to all the bishops under the date of 18 May, 2001, warned the bishops, under threat of ecclesiastical punishment, to observe "papal secrecy" in such cases.
- In his five years as Pope, Benedict XVI has done nothing to change this practice with all its fateful consequences.

Honesty demands that Joseph Ratzinger himself, the man who for decades has been principally responsible for the worldwide cover-up, at last pronounce his own "mea culpa". As Bishop Tebartz van Elst of Limburg, in a radio address on March 14, put it: "Scandalous wrongs cannot be glossed over or tolerated, we need a change of attitude that makes room for the truth. Conversion and repentance begin when guilt is openly admitted, when contrition¹ is expressed in deeds and manifested as such, when responsibility is taken, and the chance for a new beginning is seized

upon."

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