

## TABLE NOTES

### **1) What is weighing most heavily on our hearts**

Feelings of frustration and anger, shock and disappointment. The avalanche of reports is depressing. There have been reports of abuse in Germany, Ireland, Chile, NY, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania... The church is supposed to be a 'refuge from the storm'.

The extent of the crisis and cover-up, are there 49 other "Pennsylvanias"? We cannot have continued repeats. How could this go on for so long? How can we keep it from happening again? Greater transparency is needed (ditto). We are not confident that problem will be fixed considering how bad things seem. No faith that the hierarchy will be solving this problem because they should have resolved it 20 years ago. The rot is in the Vatican and in the Curia.

Bishops who knew about the abuse need to resign, held accountable by other bishops. Cover-up is very damaging. Anyone involved needs to be removed, even the Pope. The lack of accountability at the bishop level. The priests are being held somewhat accountable, but that seems to stop at the level of the bishops.

Hard to believe other bishops did not know about Cardinal McCarrick's activities. Was his behavior ignored because he raised a lot of money? Cardinal McCarrick should be in a cell right next to Bill Cosby. The guilty should be prosecuted and the diocese of Kansas should not be responsible for paying for abusive priests.

This will create a universal lack of trust for priests and bishops. Priests are set apart to be examples of holiness. We need to respect the office or vocation, but not allow cover up for anyone. We have put priests and bishops on a pedestal and feel very let down by leadership. We believe that clericalism contributed to the problem. Need to remove clericalism, and no one should be elevated above a crime. No faith in any of these commissions. If you don't know who to trust, a responsible person is going to trust everybody or nobody. Need an outside, critical group to come in and 'clean house.'

The Pope is 'talking in riddles', not providing clarity. Disappointed the Pope is waiting until February for a meeting to address the issue. The letter from Archbishop Viganò seems credible.

Were the 79 WA state cases investigated? Did any of the perpetrators get turned over to police? Did Bishop Brunett or Bishop Sartain deal with any of these cases (the 79 cases in WA)? How did they handle the situations? We want more information on the 79 cases of credible allegations. (ditto) Done reading the politically correct PR letters about the situation. Keep reading about SIN, but we should be talking about CRIMES. We all sin, but we don't know any felons. There is a perception that the Archdiocese of Seattle has been stricter on offenders.

Veritas (Safe Environment) programs seem to be working in protecting children. What about protecting seminarians? Changes were made in 2002, were they enough? Problems have been as recent as 2012. Good there is a hotline in some places, including WA.

This isn't just a Catholic problem. Protestant ministers can open a church anywhere and predatory individuals can find a place in those churches.

Concern that parishioners are leaving the church (local and universal). We want the bad priests and bishops to leave. Members vote with feet.

The huge problem of homosexuality in the seminaries and amongst the bishops and priests. We fear the homosexual problem won't be addressed. Is the universal call for chastity being upheld? We fear there will be a loss of good, holy vocations because of the homosexual environment or activity at some seminaries. (ditto) What is the policy on homosexual priests? 80% of the crimes from the Penn report were committed by predatory priests on post-pubescent boys.

Fear that all priests will be considered homosexuals or deviant. We are concerned for the suffering that this situation is having on good, holy priests. Concern for innocent priests and the 'blow back' on them.

We have an active gay subculture. We need to start hearing (from the ambo) about chastity in marriage, in the priesthood, not just for singles.

Money is a universal language. It is a lever that applies pressure to solve the rot.

We, as laity, have to play a bigger role.

Fear that real change won't happen. There is a lot of institutional inertia. It is unique for the church to ask its people to air our thoughts and feelings. Too much talk, not enough concrete steps to take.

This exercise (meeting) is part of the penitential journey/purification by fire/therapeutic grief.

Concern for individuals who are victimized because this is a wound that is hard to heal. The impact affects many people, not just the abused.

Wonder if there have been priests or religious that have asked to leave and were not allowed to do so.

What type of screening is given to priests?

Concerned that our messages will not be communicated 'up the chain.' Not confident the problem will be fixed even though things seem so bad.

## **2) What do we want to convey to the Bishops**

Include the laity in the checks and balances (investigation and enforcement) of the bishops (ditto)

Offenders need to be removed from ministry or laicized. (ditto)

Shift gears from apologies and prayers to corrective actions. This is not time for piety but action, action speaks louder than words.

Bishops don't seem to be being held accountable. We want personal sanctity of the bishops. Don't exclude bishops from scrutiny.

Continued mental health support for victims, priests, seminarians.

All the "dirt" needs to be exposed: full transparency and accountability for actions and motivations, checks and balances.

Needs of the victims cannot be subordinate to a distorted sense of mercy toward the perpetrators or an instinct for clerical self-preservation

Something concrete needs to come from the USCCB meeting in November.

Necessary to protect treasures of the Church.

Church needs professional Public Relations assistance. Hire people to answer questions/comments on this issue.

We need some basic changes:

- Married clergy? – broad and drastic accountability of the hierarchy.

- guilty should lose their jobs, just like in secular institutions.

Share the many positive aspects of the church to counter balance negative messages from the abuse reports.

Strengthen management of dioceses.

The Church and its leadership must act in solidarity with survivors. The USCCB must ensure survivor representation on the USA Commission.

The USCCB must provide robust organization and leadership on local and national levels to work toward healing for survivors, families and communities.

The USCCB should provide truth and reconciliation dialogues/processes to support transparency and education, so as not to allow history to be repeated.

The USCCB should give sufficient responsibility and power to the US branch of the Commission for the Protection of Minors, and provide an adequate, independent budget to oversee comprehensive implementation of Commission recommendations for the protection of minors. (It is shameful that some within the Vatican have advised this Commission it should raise its own funds to carry out the necessary work to protect vulnerable children, and healing from bishops' cover-up and allowing further abuse. USCCB needs to ensure the US Commission is well-funded to carry out its important work.)

Here at St. Thomas we can continually communicate through prayers, messages and actions our love and support for all those abused by priests and church employees, in the days, years and decades to come.

Create systems to support those who are vulnerable (e.g. children and adults with disabilities and with mental health challenges, children of parents who are vulnerable because of being a single-parent/poor/undocumented/disability/mental health diagnosis/incarcerated/formerly-incarcerated/homeless/uneducated/etc.)

Recognize that this abuse happened within the social cultures of church communities. This Church culture marginalized vulnerable children and adults. We must as ourselves continually: 1) Who is experiencing marginalization with our Church community? 2) How can we reach out and invite those who are marginalized to experience the support of our Church community, in a safe way with appropriate boundaries?

Keep track of what changes are occurring at the National level and what are best practices in other parishes and diocese.

### **INVOLVING THE LAITY IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE:**

Anyone who covered up this abuse should be gone, even the Pope if he knew.

We need to clean house.

Accountability needs to happen.

Protection of seminarians so they can have more safeguards.

Rotating faithful lay Catholics of all ages as:

- parish liaisons

- Diocesan review boards for all diocesan employees (including teachers) and seminarians, deacons

- Review committees for Safe Environment (keep the materials up to date)

- Organize healing Masses and support groups

- Ministry for families/victims of domestic sexual abuse

Institute a policy of making all bishops answerable for their actions

Seminarians should invite local parishioners to a weekly Mass at the seminary to celebrate as a group.

## **DEALING WITH FUTURE REVELATIONS FROM ATTORNEYS/GENERAL INQUIRIES**

Should be immediate

There should be some concrete response from Archbishop that tells what actions will be taken.

More transparency among seminary formation and deeper and in-depth screening for possible seminarians

Real consequences

Why aren't criminal charges being brought?

Knowing the danger has already been done, why aren't people being held accountable?

Homosexual attraction should eliminate candidates for the seminary

## **ABUSE BY CLERGY: BISHOPS, PRIESTS, DEACONS**

Would like to see more transparency in seminary formation, more accountability for all bishops.

Has the diocese asked what the trigger is for priests that prey on children? Many children who have been abused become abusers themselves.

Concerned that there will be a rush to a 'cause' and scapegoat made of certain groups of people/priests.

Hope someone outside the church authority has investigated abusive priests to determine what motivated or triggered their behaviors. Only when we know the motivation or understand the illness can solutions be found to stop it.

Diagram the hierarchy of the church with a listing of duties and obligations and responsibilities regarding accusation of abuse at each level.

Sharing reports of Review Board with laity would go a long way towards transparency that is so badly needed.

Like to see a country-wide prayer time at all parishes to pray for the victims, perpetrators and the church.

Celibacy and chastity apply to all, regardless of sexual orientation.

Every parent should be responsible for seeing that their child is not left alone with any adult.

No priest or nun or single worker in the church should ever be alone with a child without another adult present. This should be an iron clad rule.

Bishops who pass along priests, even once, need to go.

Guilt by association is no worse than the criminal act itself.

## **CLERICALISM**

What can the church do to eliminate and address clericalism? The leadership needs to communicate to the whole church that they are not supportive of clericalism and encourage all faithful to uproot clericalism from the church.

## **FAILURE OF THE POPE AND SOME BISHOPS TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION**

Publish online the visitation reports of seminaries

Use your communications director to broadcast:

1. Bishop's concern and desire to act
2. Bishop's actions
3. Frequent and immediate
4. Publish every credible allegation and results
5. The seminarians are heard and protected

Quietly stop abuse in homes and schools

Hire or get volunteers to respond within 1-2 weeks to all calls, emails, web forms, snail mail (perception of bishop care, responsiveness level)

Always include adults in talk about abuse.

Offer to meet personally with victims.

Take care of priests: make them take their vacations, say their breviary, spiritual direction.

Tell us that all diocesan computers have filters and their employees and students, too.

All orders of priests and their houses of formation – we need to hear they are following new guidelines.

Be sure prospective seminarians are asked if they were abused or if they ever watched excessive porn and what kind.

Internationally solve the common cultural acceptance of the notions that priests have mistresses.

Annual reports on seminary stats: ratio of students to spiritual directors, subjects taught, abuse cases.

Prosecute and remove bishops who have covered up sexual abuse in their archdioceses.

Provide follow up counseling/support for healing of these bishops.

## OTHER

Too much apologizing.

Need to start a campaign to show the treasures of the church, spiritual and material (schools, orphanages, etc).

Need more priests.

We need more resources to defend our faith.

Do something – stop the ‘fluff and stuff’.

Get rid of the bad priests and bishops.

Hold Bishops accountable.

Study the homosexual issue in the priesthood and what effect it has on this horrible scandal.

The bishops are not being held accountable.

Believe this is a homosexual problem in some of the seminaries, among priests and some bishops, adult same-sex relationships. Can be part of the problem in the hierarchy.

Improve Safe Environment training by adding more explicit treatment of how it affects vulnerable adults (current program focuses almost exclusively on children). (ditto)

Reinstate praying the ‘St. Michael’ prayers at the end of all Masses in the archdiocese of Seattle. (ditto 3)

Bring back the tradition of kneeling at Mass at the Lamb of God through the reception of Holy Communion, like Archbishop Sample has in the Portland diocese.

We, the laity, are leery of giving money to the church which then goes to fund either .....lifestyles and/or payoffs to past victims.

Reverence that is real in the celebration of the Holy Mass needs to be a prime focus. Mass is not just another church service possibly interrupting football, but the source and summit of our lives. This attitude is not readily apparent in most of your parishes in Seattle.

The perceived environment:

This society has removed God from its midst. The press is known by its bias thinking about religion. Instant gratification is the norm, the social media is a big contributor.

What is lacking:

the teaching of religion and the need to emphasize the existence of punishment, that is condemnation .  
Prize is heaven for the faithful.

Without total transparency, the church is at risk of losing a generation of followers. My own children, born and raised Catholics, no longer attend church. They were showing signs of returning because they liked Pope Francis, however, this second abuse crisis has closed the door which may never be opened without total transparency.

Is the Pope competent? If not, what?

A movement exists that adamantly pursues the elimination of our church. What are you doing?

Governance -

“super dioceses’ need to be broken up into smaller ones.

There is too much money/property in some of the dioceses.

Bishops need to return to being shepherds in smaller dioceses.

‘airport’ bishops need to be eliminated.

Bishops need to return to teaching and staying local.

Have more novenas to end abuse or for our seminarians and priests to give them encouragement and strength.

Need to publish the downward trend of less abuses.

Which bishops knew about Cardinal McCarrick? They need to be removed or resign. Why is he still a Cardinal?

Let’s talk of striving for lives of holiness, sanctity and mission in the world but not of the world. Too much emphasis made of the church as just another charitable organization. The goal is to be a saint. Our world is crying out for these.

Pedophile screening process conducted by mental health experts.

Reforms must include:

- 1) full and complete investigations of sexual abuse by an independent commission including laity.
- 2) Complete transparency: past and future

- 3) Expansion of zero tolerance policy to seminarians/bishops
- 4) call for faithfulness, including bishops
- 5) independent ethics hotline for reporting criminal and other conduct.
- 6) protections against retaliation for reporting.

Every diocese should have a council to address any reports of abuse. It should include: mental health clinician, doctors, bishop, priest, deacon, sister, laity. Bishops should not lead the investigations at all, around the world.

Reflect upon the priesthood and its current format and reform the priesthood.

What is it about an all male priesthood has limited our ability to deal with sexual abuse as a church? The theological justification for priesthood in its current form is not strong, so we have to look at the deeper theological and spiritual roots in looking at a more open priesthood for all capable pastors that will diversify our leadership on all levels. Having all people able to fulfill their full vocations can only strengthen the church in all matters. Our church needs broader leadership for so many reasons. Open the doors and welcome all who are qualified to live their vocation.

Regarding the NW Catholic magazine of 10/2018 written by Kevin Birnbaum:

His comment referring to the allegations that the sex abuse cover-up extends all the way to the papacy is very telling. The church has gone through hard times before – sufficient to mention the time of Alexander the Sixth, the Spanish Pap Borgia. Our church will pay a high price, but will resurge stronger and purified.

some ideas: The Pope needs to clearly delineate a path for what lays ahead, although frankly I do not think he is equipped to do it. We need someone that is not contaminated with the socialism/communist thinking. The social justice philosophy has produced very poor results. We need somebody that understands that the animals do not go to heaven. Someone that when asked ‘what do you think of homosexuality, gay marriage, etc’ doesn’t answer “who am I to judge?” Well, he is the Pope, he was given the opportunity of standing firm on the church’s precepts and he did not take it. Pray for the Pope.