

## **In the Vineyard January 14 2009**

### **News from National**

#### **VOTF Names Bishops Who Should Resign**

It has been seven years since the clergy abuse scandal rocked the Catholic Church in the United States. Seven years and so many bishops have not taken responsibility for aiding and abetting predator priests. Seven years and a crisis of equal caliber threatens the Church in Ireland. Seven years and many Catholics are still asking for justice for survivors and accountability for bishops worldwide. Seven years is enough.

As a follow up to the ad in the *New York Times* last year, where VOTF asked Pope Benedict XVI for accountability, VOTF is now asking bishops to examine their consciences and, if appropriate, resign their ecclesiastical offices. We have suggested that resignations might begin with the six bishops who by their own testimony or by the verified evidence in public records knowingly transferred predator priests. Read our press release and the in-depth report.

### **Update on Strategic Plan**

Work on VOTF's new Strategic Plan has begun! With a high level of enthusiasm, close to 50 volunteers leaders have stepped forward to Make our Voices Heard. Many thanks to those who have already joined the efforts. If you are still interested in joining one of the platforms please email [votfoffice@votf.org](mailto:votfoffice@votf.org). If you haven't yet read the Strategic Plan click [here](#).

**Happy New Year!** To read VOTF's New Year's Message, click [here](#).

### **Affiliate News**

#### **Crisis of Credibility Transfixes Irish Church**

By Sean O'Conaill, VOTF Ireland

On Friday January 2, Ireland's premier newspaper, the *Irish Times*, reported a mantra repeated by the Irish Catholic primate, Cardinal Sean Brady of Armagh, at the start of the new year:

“At all times the welfare of children must be the paramount consideration.”

We have grown familiar with this soothing verbal assurance since Ireland's first clerical child abuse scandal in 1994, and more especially since the awful Ferns report of 2005. However, the very next day ... To read more, see **Crisis of Credibility**.

However the very next day, on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the *Irish Times* reported a strange contradiction. According to a source in Ireland's health ministry—the Health Services Executive (HSE)—no Irish Catholic bishop had been able to complete a crucial section of an HSE questionnaire relating to its child protection practices in all dioceses. That section would have revealed for all dioceses the kind of information we had all received on December 19th 2008 about one. The southern diocese of Cloyne (in County Cork) had still in that year been placing Catholic children in danger of clerical sexual abuse by failing to report serious allegations about two serving priests to the police.

That information on Cloyne was contained in a report completed by the church's own child safety czar, Ian Elliott, in July 2008, but not published until December. CEO of the National Board for Safeguarding Children (NBSC), Elliott revealed that despite clear undertaking made in the wake of Ferns, Bishop John Magee of Cloyne had failed to pass on to the local police allegations of abuse against two priests of the diocese, who had continued their ministry there.

On January 7th, Ireland's Minister for Children, Mr. Barry Andrews, confirmed the *Irish Times* report of January 3rd, and revealed that Bishop John Magee had made a false declaration to him personally: "... There is evidence ... that Bishop Magee ... did not faithfully report actual compliance with child protection procedures and the manner in which clerical sexual abuse allegations have been dealt with."

What can 'paramount' mean when speaking of the welfare of children, other than 'more important than anything else'? Whatever consideration prevented Irish bishops from completing a questionnaire designed by the Irish state to audit child protection measures in all Irish dioceses—that consideration is what appears to be paramount for Cardinal Brady and his colleagues. Combined with Bishop Magee's willingness to mislead his own government, it means that the parents of Ireland's Catholic children can't be sure of just how safe they are in most dioceses.

Especially because some of Bishop Magee's fellow bishops have since expressed their support for him. They can't have reflected long enough on the implications of that. Especially that they apparently think it acceptable for a Catholic bishop to make a false declaration relating to child safety to an Irish government minister. (If it is OK for bishops to make false declarations, what is the point of all of them signing a declaration of compliance with child safety rules that the Cardinal himself has now called for? Why should we believe any such declaration?)

Ian Elliott's report on Cloyne has therefore precipitated a far wider crisis for the Irish Catholic church. Ireland's next ranking cleric after Cardinal Brady, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, has felt compelled to insist that if Irish bishops cannot implement a single national system of child protection, he will feel obliged to act unilaterally to impose a uniform system for all clergy serving in the archdiocese, which is by far Ireland's largest.

There is no precedent for this implicit rebuke delivered by Dublin's archbishop to a fellow bishop. There is no precedent for a bishop as totally discredited as Magee still clinging to office. And there is no precedent either for the crisis of credibility and trust that now surrounds Irish bishops' assurances that children are their paramount consideration.

The commitment of the Irish government to child safety is also seriously open to question, because that government 'audit' would not have revealed what was going on in Cloyne, and the government was evidently prepared to accept non-disclosure of crucial information from all dioceses – until it had learned about Bishop Magee's failures from the NBSC.

There is no possibility that this crisis will be over soon. Two major state investigations of past clerical abuse are due to report early this year. One – into the Dublin archdiocese—will probably cause greater shock than the Ferns report of 2005. The second, into the Irish state residential institutions for children at risk that were run by Catholic clergy until the 1970s, are also expected to be traumatic and damaging.

Ian Elliott is also expected to deliver his first annual report on child protection progress in all dioceses soon. That will help to answer the most pressing question: the safety of Catholic children now in all Irish dioceses. Despite everything we know about the trauma caused by clerical sexual abuse, Irish bishops are still apparently placing legal obstacles in the way of complete transparency over that. They argue that Irish law places them in danger of being sued if they are completely transparent, but to Irish parents and survivors this clearly implies that for them it is the legal considerations, not the safety of children, that is paramount.

Archbishop Martin and a few other bishops do inspire some confidence still, but when all of them will make truly paramount the welfare of Irish Catholic children is still not clear. Until then, all merely verbal assurances will be sounding brass and clanging cymbal. Ireland's Catholic church is in its deepest ever crisis. Cromwell's depredations never came anywhere close to bankrupting our church's most important moral capital – it's appointed leaders' reputation for integrity.

**To read more on the Irish Crisis:**

**Sunday Business Post Dublin Ireland**

**Gardaí didn't disclose Cloyne abuse complaint for two years**

<http://www.sbpost.ie/post/pages/p/story.aspx-qqqt=NEWS-qqqs=news-qqqid=38747-qqqx=1.asp>

**The actions of the bishops are an absolute disgrace**

[http://www.sbpost.ie/post/pages/p/commentandanalysis.aspx-](http://www.sbpost.ie/post/pages/p/commentandanalysis.aspx-qqqt=COMMENT+AND+ANALYSIS-qqqs=commentandanalysis-qqqx=1.asp)

[qqqt=COMMENT+AND+ANALYSIS-qqqs=commentandanalysis-qqqx=1.asp](http://www.sbpost.ie/post/pages/p/commentandanalysis.aspx-qqqt=COMMENT+AND+ANALYSIS-qqqs=commentandanalysis-qqqx=1.asp)

## **News from the Working Groups**

Prayerful Voice Suggestion

Gaile M. Polhaus, PhD

Visiting in another parish recently I was surprised and pleased to hear a prayer from my youth recited at the end of Mass. It was being said to protect children.

PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael the Archangel,  
defend us in battle.

Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,  
and do thou,

O Prince of the heavenly hosts,

by the power of God,

thrust into hell Satan,

and all the evil spirits,

who prowl about the world

seeking the ruin of souls. Amen..

In addition to our prayer at noon we should recite this daily and perhaps more parishes could adopt the practice.

## Site Seeing

Paul Lakeland discusses the importation of foreign priests in last week's *New York Times*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/04/opinion/104priests.html>

VOTF's John Ryan is quoted in the *Peoria Journal Star*

<http://www.pjstar.com/news/x1299642257/Abuse-survivors-fight-Diocese>

*National Catholic Reporter* has a previously unpublished interview with Cardinal Avery Dulles

<http://ncrcafe.org/node/2340>

## Calendar

### ***Bridgeport Voice of the Faithful***

February 5, Carmine Galasso, Sr. Photographer at New Jersey's *The Record* and author of *Crosses: Portrait of Clergy Abuse* will speak to VOTF Bridgeport.

### ***Bridgeport VOTF's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference***

"Do This in Memory of Me": The Future of the Eucharist to be held at Fairfield University Saturday, March 28, 2009.

Presented by: The Center for Catholic Studies of Fairfield University and Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport. For more information: [votfbpt.org](http://votfbpt.org).

### ***Wisdom House***

A "Centering Prayer Winter Retreat" will be held at Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center in Litchfield Connecticut

Friday, January 23rd at 6 pm to Sunday, January 25th at 1 pm.

A workshop entitled “Soothe the Soul” will be held at Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center from 9:30 am to 12 noon on Saturday, January 17th.

For further information on either of these programs, call Wisdom House at 860.567.3163, email [programs@wisdomhouse.org](mailto:programs@wisdomhouse.org), or visit [www.wisdomhouse.org](http://www.wisdomhouse.org).

### ***Dominican University***

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton to speak at Dominican University  
Lenten Lecture – Forgiveness: Doorway to the House of Peace

Thursday, February 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Priory Auditorium, Dominican University Priory Campus

7200 W. Division, River Forest, IL

\$10 Admission

Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton will examine the spiritual and personal dimensions of living in a truly sustainable, life-giving way. He will share stories of his own journey and those of other wayfarers as he explores a critical Lenten theme. How does one forgive? How can we be people of peace in our culture? What spiritual disciplines can we learn from peacemakers today? Bishop Gumbleton, an auxiliary bishop in the Catholic archdiocese of Detroit, is the founding president of Pax Christi USA and a ceaseless campaigner for forgiveness and true peace in global, local, and ecclesial conflicts.  
<http://domin.dom.edu/depts/siena/events.html#lentenlecture>

### **Book Corner**

*American Savior: A Novel of Divine Politics*, by Roland Merullo.

There are those who hope Barack Obama will be an American savior. But in Roland Merullo’s book, it is the real Messiah who runs for president. This humorous novel imagines what would happen if Jesus ran for president. Told from the perspective of a campaign insider, the main focus of the story is on the enlightenment of those closest to the candidate, rather than politics itself. It is a funny and often biting look at the world of American politics.

Read a review in the Washington Post [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/21/AR2008082102366\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/21/AR2008082102366_pf.html)

To buy this or any book on Amazon, please go to [VOTF.org](http://VOTF.org) and click on the Amazon link. Voice of the Faithful will receive a small percentage of the purchase price.

### **Letters to the Editor**

VOTF routinely publishes news about notorious bishops, cardinals, etc. who have protected and tolerated pedophiles. Has anyone compiled a summary list of living American hierarchy who are known to have acted in this manner, i.e. conspired to

conceal the crimes of pedophile priests under their supervision? It would help to sort out the sheep from the goats.

Charles Lehman

### **Questions, Comments?**

Please send them to Siobhan Carroll, Vineyard Editor at [Vineyard@votf.org](mailto:Vineyard@votf.org). Unless otherwise indicated, I will assume comments can be published as Letters to the Editor.