

## **January 28 In the Vineyard**

### **News from National**

#### **Remembering Haiti**

Good and Gracious God, send strength and fortitude to the survivors of the Haitian earthquake and all who are assisting them. And send peace and comfort to all those who have lost loved ones.

Catholic Relief Services has set up a website for donations to the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. If you are interested in helping out, please follow the link [https://secure.crs.org/site/Donation2?df\\_id=3181&3181.donation=form1](https://secure.crs.org/site/Donation2?df_id=3181&3181.donation=form1)

#### **VOTF 2010 Election Campaign Underway**

The following people have been nominated for national office in the 2010 National Officer Elections: Dan Bartley, Gaile Pohlhaus, Janet Hauter, Nick Mazza, Anne Southwood and Kevin Connors.

The election campaign will end on Monday, February 8, 2010, when the voting period opens. Voting will be open for two weeks, ending at 12 noon on Monday, February 22, 2010. The results of the election will be announced on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, and the newly elected officers will take office on March 15, 2010.

During the campaign, there are several ways for VOTF members to get to know the candidates and discuss the issues:

*For more information*

VOTF 2010 Election Campaign Begins

- The candidates' statements are posted on the VOTF website.([www.votf.org](http://www.votf.org))
- The “Candidates Forum” on the website provides the opportunity to pose a question to a candidate
- Every Wednesday, registered voters will receive a campaign “bulletin” from the candidates in rotation.
- During the first week of February, live interviews with the candidates will be posted on the VOTF website.

The Election Committee looks forward to a campaign time of lively discussion and charitable disposition, where we will model, as an organization, the kind of procedures that we would want to see in other institutions, notably the Church. Any questions about the process can be sent to Sheila Peiffer at [sheila\\_peiffer@yahoo.com](mailto:sheila_peiffer@yahoo.com).

## **Update on Ireland**

### **Clerical Sexual Abuse in Ireland has Roots in the Vatican**

*Sean O’Conaill is the acting coordinator for Voice of the Faithful in Ireland. He is a former history professor and a published writer from Coleraine, Northern Ireland.*

The pre-Christmas season in Ireland was dominated for Catholics by a revelation of the total failure of four Archbishops of Dublin, and of their auxiliaries, to protect defenseless children - over three decades.

The Irish government’s Murphy report of November 26 was based only upon a sample of sexual abuse cases, so the full scale of the Dublin horror will never be known. Even so, the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference felt compelled to utter a stark summary of the Irish situation on December 9th. They said that the cover-up revealed in the Murphy report “indicates a culture that was widespread in the Church.”

It follows that although only three Irish dioceses have so far been investigated, no other Irish diocese can be supposed to have been immune to this catastrophe, and no Irish bishop who served in this period can be supposed to be entirely free from the same condemnation. Nor is this disgrace by any means confined to Ireland.

Knowing full well that only the papacy has the authority to discipline errant bishops, and incensed by the failure of the Irish Apostolic Nuncio and the Vatican to cooperate with the Murphy commission, Irish Catholics then looked to a meeting of Ireland’s premier archbishops with the pope on December 11th.

This meeting failed to end their justifiable anger. A papal communiqué did not address the issue of bishops’ resignations, nor the issue of Vatican non-cooperation with the commission. Worse, it implied that this Irish crisis was merely a local matter and could be resolved by a papal pastoral letter addressed to Ireland alone.

The Irish are bewildered because they know well that this analysis of the situation can be refuted simply by mentioning a name—the name of a former archbishop who behaved exactly as the four disgraced archbishops of Dublin had done.

Bernard Law.

### **Clerical Sexual Abuse in Ireland has Roots in the Vatican (continued)**

*Sean O’Conaill is the acting coordinator for Voice of the Faithful in Ireland. He is a former history professor and a published writer from Coleraine, Northern Ireland.*

In December 2002, Cardinal Law resigned his post in the scandal-ridden Boston archdiocese in the midst of an intense public outcry over his cover-up of decades of sexual abuse of children by priests. Yet he now presides over one of the great basilica churches in Rome.

Even if most Irish bishops were sacked tomorrow, the same cardinal sits on the Vatican body that would appoint a new set of probably more powerful Irish bishops.

Bernard Law.

The Church still refuses to hold to account bishops who endanger children. We know that only secular agencies have done that - civil courts, media, and the state. Only upon the public outcry as a result of the Murphy Report did four Irish bishops finally resign, each protesting his innocence.

The Church is still unable to regulate itself. Its central system of governance is dysfunctional. The papacy appears entirely willing to tolerate this state of affairs, misrepresenting this Dublin crisis as though it had nothing in common with Boston in 2002, Philadelphia in 2004 or Los Angeles in 2007, not to mention Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Europe, Africa and Latin America. Rome proves its obliviousness by offering the patronage of the Holy See to the person who best symbolizes the total unaccountability of Catholic bishops globally.

The still-influential Bernard Law.

It was survivors of abuse in Dublin who called to account five bishops who had served in Dublin during the period of the cover-up. These bishops had to be reminded by survivor Marie Collins that we Catholics have all been taught about “sins of omission”—the culpable evil of failing to act when action is required—in this case to protect the innocent.

What is it that prevents the Vatican from imposing accountability upon Bernard Law and other Catholic bishops? Why does it wait for a local storm to blow any bishop from office? Why can it not make any connection between this policy and the 11 million former US Catholics who no longer practice their faith? Why is Dublin's present Archbishop Diarmuid Martin the church's only example of a bishop seeking to hold other failing bishops to account?

Irish Catholics are increasingly asking these questions as are Catholics in the US, and throughout the world wherever the abuse scandal has been revealed. They are coming to an inescapable conclusion: their church's system of government subverts its mission and makes a mockery of the rigid code of sexual morality to which it seeks to hold the laity and pretends to hold the clergy. It is a formula for endless scandal and disgrace. If this papacy is to rise to this challenge it must stop behaving as though there were no systemic weakness paralyzing its mission everywhere. Unaccountable bishops misbehave precisely because they are unaccountable. Rome needs to demonstrate that it has finally gotten the message that the people of Boston sent it in 2002.

How? First, by sacking and secluding Bernard Law and then by undertaking a comprehensive overhaul of the present clerical governance structure of the Catholic Church.

## **VOTF Ireland statement on the pending papal pastoral letter to Ireland - 21st Jan, 2010**

The moral authority of the papacy in Ireland, and of Catholic bishops here, is likely to collapse if the promised papal pastoral letter to Ireland does not squarely address the issue of the widespread cover up by bishops of the outrage of clerical child sexual abuse.

Despite the strong leadership shown by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, the prestige and authority of Catholic bishops in Ireland, and of the papacy, continue to decline in the wake of the Murphy report of November 26, 2009.

Especially damaging was the admission by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference on December 9th, 2009 that the Murphy report indicated a widespread culture of covering up clerical child sexual abuse in the church.

This should have been followed by the immediate resignation of all Irish bishops who had participated in or acceded to this cover up. It should also have triggered an immediate declaration from the papacy that this cover up would be investigated and explained - especially because it is well known to the faithful that this problem extends well beyond Ireland, and implicates the universal Church and its governance from Rome.

The reluctance of implicated bishops to resign, and the failure of the papacy to declare any such intent, have so seriously damaged the moral prestige of the office of Catholic bishops, and of the papacy, that recovery may already be impossible. We are alarmed also at reports that the promised papal pastoral may go no further than to repeat empty condemnations of clerical sex abuse, without fully addressing the issue of betrayal of children by bishops.

We therefore call urgently upon the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference:

- To request the papacy to initiate a thorough inquiry into all aspects of the outrage of clerical child sexual abuse, especially the covering up of this outrage by bishops;
- To request the Pope to declare an intention to do this in his promised pastoral letter to Ireland;
- To assure the Pope that without such a declaration this pastoral will fail to grasp the scale of the crisis, and will fail also to initiate a recovery of the Catholic church in Ireland;
- To ensure that a thorough investigation of all remaining Irish dioceses is undertaken, to determine whether the evils of abuse and cover up revealed in the Murphy Report are prevalent elsewhere;
- To establish a National Forum for survivors of clerical abuse, and for their supporters, to help respond to their pastoral needs;

- To request the immediate resignations of all Irish bishops implicated in the cover up of clerical child sex abuse.

The Winchester Area VOTF recently celebrated a prayer service for the Irish victims. If you are interested in using it at your own meetings, the service can be found at <http://www.votfwinchester.org/prayerfulvoice.html> below the graphic.

## **Voices in Action**

### **News from Spiritual and Communal Growth**

The Spiritual and Communal Growth Team would like to make VOTF members aware of the central value of Centering Prayer in our time. At the Long Island Conference, Fr. Donald Cozzens encouraged VOTF to begin all meetings with at least five minutes of silence, in which each participant could center her/himself on the presence of God within.

Tom Connolly, a member of the SCG Team, is a practitioner of Centering Prayer and would like to make himself available to affiliates and others, especially the abused and their relatives, to foster the use of Centering Prayer in these tumultuous times. A victim of clerical sexual abuse himself, Tom is an authorized presenter of centering prayer workshops and retreats. He can be contacted at [tconnoll@comcast.net](mailto:tconnoll@comcast.net). Below is Tom's statement about Centering Prayer.

“Centering prayer is perhaps the best known method of Christian meditation in our time. It is a renewal of one of the most honored and most ancient of all Christian prayer traditions, founded upon the Indwelling Trinity at the center of our being who calls us into profound and intimate relationship. Through the daily practice of this prayer we are transformed in Christ, and healed at the deepest spiritual level. The Spiritual and Communal Growth Team of VOTF can introduce interested parties to this prayer, above all the abused themselves, their relatives, and those confused about the significance of this tragic crisis. For further information visit [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org) .”

## **National Working Groups**

### **Priest of Integrity Nominee**

This issue of *In the Vineyard* focuses on Reverend Patrick J. Brennan and the work he is doing for others and for the good of our church. Reverend Brennan was nominated by Chicagoland VOTF with great enthusiasm and support for his dedication as a Servant Leader to the people he has served throughout his years of priesthood.

In addition to his last role as pastor at Holy Family Catholic Community in Inverness, IL and priest in residence at St. Thomas the Apostle, Naperville, IL, he is the Director of Mission Integration and Pastoral Care at The Clare, a retirement residence in downtown Chicago, President of the National Center for Evangelization and Parish Renewal, and a Therapist with a PhD in Psychology.

Rev. Brennan is the driving force behind Small Christian Communities where the laity is challenged to live their Baptismal promises to function as priest, prophet, and king. He is renowned for his gift of preaching, which draws Catholics from 90 surrounding communities. He encourages mature, conscience-inspired responses to the Gospel message in moral decisions, regardless of the consequences. He has boldly confronted injustice in the systems and institutions of the church and the world, including the mishandling of the clergy abuse scandal.

In recognition of Rev. Brennan's faithful dedication to the People of God, we give thanks for the encouragement and challenge that he has given us by his faithful dedication. Reverend Patrick J. Brennan is a priest worthy of our admiration.

## Site Seeing

The head of the Vatican's Congregation for Clergy, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, says incidents of sexual abuse should be handled by civil authorities as well as church authorities....

<http://www.americamagazine.org/content/signs.cfm?signid=325&comments=1#readcomments>

Father Richard McBrien writes about what effective leadership looks like...

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/what-effective-leadership-looks>

The *Patriot Ledger* reports on VOTF Scituate and VOTF's history...

<http://www.patriotledger.com/news/x231951164/Eight-years-later-Voice-of-the-Faithful-still-talking>

The *Windsor Star* reports on the situation in Ireland...

<http://www.windsorstar.com/news/Irish+bishops+welcome+Vatican+child+abuse+summit+plan/2473710/story.html>

Irish bishops to meet in advance of pastoral letter from Pope...

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0119/abuse.html>

The *Irish Examiner* reports on the situation in Ireland....

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/bishops-hold-talks-after-sex-abuse-report-443053.html>

The *Irish Independent* reports on the “bunker talks” that Ireland’s bishops are engaged in...

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/john-cooney-bishops-use-bunker-talks-to-devise-deeply-flawed-strategy-2029998.html>

Here is a link to an interesting blog by C21 acting director John McGinty...What kind of response should we make to the situation in Ireland?

<https://share.bc.edu/117/17630>