

## ADDRESSING THE CRISES IN THE CHURCH:

WHAT ARE WE SEEING  
WHAT IS WORKING  
& WHAT IS NEEDED

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Addressing the Abuse Crisis within the Church –  
Clergy Perspective

## REASON FOR OUR HOPE



## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE



- First Year Seminarian (2001-02)
- First published reports of the sex abuse scandal
- “Dallas Charter”
- Seminary Apostolic Visitation
- Local Church experiences
  - Grand Jury Report #1
  - Grand Jury Report #2
- Summer 2018

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

**Vatican II**

- Decree on Priestly Training (*Optatum Totius*) (1965)
- Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*) (1965)

**Papal Documents**

- Pope Paul VI, Encyclical Letter on the Celibacy of Priests (*Sacerdotalis Coelibatus*) (1967)
- Pope John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*) (1992)

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy (1974)
- Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders (2006)
- Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood (2008)

USCCB

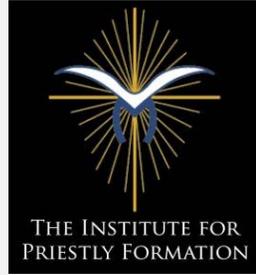
- Program for Priestly Formation, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2005)
- Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in Seminary Admissions (2015)
- Awaiting the development and approval of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the PPF, as a result of the Congregation for Clergy's Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (2016)

FORMATION CHALLENGES

- Difficulty in defining and “measuring” human formation in practice
- Lack of psychological study by many/most formators
- Lack of formal training in seminary formation
- A formator’s frame of reference is first and foremost how he was formed (can make change slow)



REASONS FOR HOPE...



SEMINARY FORMATION COUNCIL



WHERE DO WE GO?

- Further training of formators
- Increasing diversity of members within Admissions Committees
- Even greater collaboration with psychological experts who are faithful to Catholic anthropology
- Need for a more systematic and comprehensive approach to teach/address issues of psychosexual development, affective maturity, and chastity



SEMINARY ASSESSMENT GROUP  
REPRESENTED BY  
SHANNON MULLEN, PHD

Seminary Assessment Perspective:  
What are we seeing, what is working, and  
what is needed?

WHAT ARE WE SEEING?

- Clinical Bias (Clericalism?)
  - Deference towards the candidates is often seen in reports.
- Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down Recommendations
  - Not helpful to decision makers or the formators.
- Some Reports are Panegyrics About the Candidate, Rather Than Assessment.
  - Glorified letter of recommendation, not informative, not assessment.

WHAT ARE WE SEEING?

- Candidate Reported Problematic Sexual Behavior **Not** Included in Psychological Report.
  - Candidate reported the behaviors to the assessor, but such is not mentioned in the Psychological Report.
- Candidates Admitted to Seminary Even When Sexual Issues Have Been Documented in Psychological Report.
  - Unsure if treatment recommendations are being followed during formation.
- Discrepancies in the level of evaluation between the permanent diaconate and candidates for priestly formation.

WHAT ARE WE SEEING?

- The Absence of Comprehensive Psychosexual Testing and Interviewing Documented in the Psychological Report.
  - Greater clarity and general standardization of this component is lacking (each diocese or seminary establishing different requirements/standards).
  - Level I sexual behavior not adequately assessed, lacking in detail and history.
- Psychological Reports **Not** Being Provided to Treating Clinician During Seminary Formation.
  - Who owns the report and how can the evaluation report be better utilized in formation to address problematic behaviors?

WHAT IS WORKING?

- Greater clinical utilization of psychosexual testing and interviewing.
- Greater exploration of Level I sexual behavior (masturbation and pornography use etc., progress still to be made)
- Greater clarity on the need to assess for same-sex behavior and arousal template.
- Greater clarity on “continence” requirement prior to beginning formation.
  - (2 years prior to beginning formation, PPF of the USCCB)

WHAT IS WORKING?

- Greater clarity on the referral questions specific to sexual behavior; arousal template, trauma, and comorbid addictions.
- Professional platform (seminary assessment committee) to discuss needs, concerns, and options for recommendations and assessment tools.
- Increased participation in continuing education or certification in assessing sexual behavior.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

- We need to be clear and specific about recommendations (no thumbs up or down, nor panegyrics).
- Must answer specific referral questions
- Must address comprehensive psychosexual questions
- Must be clear if additional assessment is required (for treatment planning or risk assessment).
- Clinical objectivity must be maintained and protected. Possible utility of clinical assessment/treatment professional consultation groups.
- Greater collaboration between the assessing and treating clinicians and more cohesive recommendations for decision makers (referral).

WHAT IS NEEDED?

- ***If the seminary/diocese makes an admission exception for a candidate with problematic sexual behaviors,*** certain interventions and assessments need to be permitted during the formation process:
  - A referral should be made for assessment for treatment planning
  - Treatment plan must be followed in order to continue in formation
  - Seminary must accommodate all treatment requirements (therapy, 12-step, inpatient care etc.)
  - Periodic re-evaluation with clear time limits on therapeutic goals for sobriety must be established

WHAT IS NEEDED?

- Uniformity
  - Each diocese or seminary differs in their expectations of testing battery and referral questions.
  - Two years of sexual continence (including pornography and masturbation) prior to formation should be the consistent standard, but has not been universally applied in the US. (PPF of the USCCB)
  - Who owns the psychological report and how is that information shared/protected in the interest of assisting in ongoing treatment and treatment planning?

WHAT IS NEEDED?

- A comprehensive study to evaluate the sexual purity, including SSA, of seminarians during formation is suggested.
- Assuming most if not all seminarians received a positive recommendation for seminary, **will a study determine that most if not all seminarians are chaste?**
- Rates of masturbation and pornography use within seminary and associated unchaste behavior including same-sex behavior or fornication should be measured and described by objective research methods.
- Analysis of the practical application of suggested interventions during formation is warranted. Can seminaries accommodate a recovery treatment plan for problematic sexual behavior?

DIACONAL FORMATION  
MICHELLE BROWNING, MA, LMFT

Observations, Actions & Unaddressed Needs

SURVEY OF 3 (ARCH)DIOCESES

- Regarding the recent church crisis/scandal, what is the Permanent Diaconate and those in Diaconal Formation in your Diocese:
  - Question 1. Observing? What message is being conveyed?
  - Question 2. What actions are being taken?
  - Question 3. What unaddressed needs exist?

QUESTION 1. OBSERVING? WHAT MESSAGE IS BEING CONVEYED?

- **Diocese #1:** No formal response, policy or statements from bishop or diocese presented in formation classes. Message conveyed, "Be careful what you say", along with reminders that we are on the side of the bishop. Formators don't seem to be receiving direction from bishop.
- **Diocese #2:** Formal, professional, proactive approach of bishop and diocese. Message conveyed, "We need to be transparent and follow the lead of our bishop who has always led with the potential victims' best interest in mind." In addition, message that deacons are held to the same standards and similar processes as a priest, is taught. The diocese's Chancellor for Canonical Affairs presented what the policies and procedures are in handling a case.
- **Archdiocese:** No formal presentation, policy or statements. Only one open Q&A w/ auxiliary bishop at the beginning of the formation year has been offered. His message, "Stay the course and have faith". No formal message, no unified Diocesan response. No mention in Diaconal Formation classes during this past year.

QUESTION 2. WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN?

- **Diocese #1:** Subject not being taught or discussed in formation classes except that all inquiries should be directed to the bishop's office; only the bishop speaks on this.
  - Aspirants and candidates go through background checks.
- **Diocese #2:** Bishop visited all parishes where allegations were made against a priest and talked directly and openly to those in the parish. Bishop hired an independent company to complete an independent investigation in every case; findings published on diocese website and in diocese newspaper.
  - Policies and procedures have been explained to formation classes on what is expected of them as possible future deacons and their role if they ever have to report anything. Several instructors have covered the topic and the men have received written, homework assignments on it as well.
  - Message taught: Stay vigilant in the established policies and procedures that were put in place almost 17 years ago. Continued investigation and open public disclosure for anything new discovered in any of the known cases.
  - Aspirants and candidates go through background checks.

QUESTION 2. WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN? (CONT'D)

- **Archdiocese :** No formal communication in diaconal formation meetings/ gatherings/ sessions, All applications to the Diaconate (and inquirers) are required to be trained in Protecting God's Children, have FBI fingerprints, state police criminal background check, state child abuse background check. Any additional clearances at volunteer sites are responsibility of aspirant / candidate.
  - Archdiocese is assisting victims by establishing a fund for financial reparation to victims – possibly only to those that fall outside of statute of limitations. The fund does not include court system costs and is not fully funded at this time. Sadly, some funding is supplied by the selling of church assets (i.e. closed parishes and possibly a seminary that might close).

QUESTION 3. WHAT UNADDRESSED NEEDS EXIST?

- **Diocese #1:** More information.
- **Diocese #2:** Counseling and support for any/ all victims.
- **Archdiocese:** A response. Any response from bishop / diocese addressing the questions and concerns of those in formation is needed. Aspirants and candidates want to be led.

REGARDING THE RECENT CHURCH CRISIS/SCANDAL, WHAT IS YOUR OWN HOME PARISH: +OBSERVING? WHAT MESSAGE IS BEING CONVEYED? +WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN? +WHAT ARE THE UNADDRESSED NEEDS?

- **Diocese #1:** Our pastor and associate pastor read bishop's letter at every Mass. The abuse and the victims included in prayer intentions at every Mass since the letter was read.
- **Diocese #2:** Our pastor addressed the crisis at every Mass over one weekend. Then the diocese sent out an updated message by our Bishop earlier this year, to be played as a DVD or CD in both in English and Spanish at all Masses over a weekend.
  - Employees of the parish (I am one), have had increased and continued training provided by the diocese.
- **Archdiocese:** Archbishop sent a letter to all parishes to be read at every Mass. Depending on the pastor, the message was read verbatim, or summarized, or not mentioned at all.
  - Each parish was asked to offer penitential services in response to and in reparation for the scandal (focusing on the victims). The response has not been uniform in the parishes with some offering little to nothing.

**LAYPERSONS – FROM A CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE**  
JENNIFER MADERE, MA, LPC-S

What are we seeing?  
What's working?  
What's needed?

**WHAT ARE WE SEEING**

- Parish communities (staff and parishioners) affected by recent abuse of power, discovery of recent or past abuse, adjusting to new clergy, reality, etc.
- Attempts to rewrite history, rename buildings, etc.
- Currents of coming together for a cause, and currents of division
- Crises in faith, activation of issues which had lain dormant
- Loss of groundedness in principles of basic human dignity, virtue
- Greif in response to appropriate and inappropriate response from clergy and others in authority
- Those who are suffering the most: persons who have been revictimized or retraumatized

**WHAT ARE WE DOING?  
WHAT'S WORKING?**

- Offering consultation support to affected clergy, parish staff, etc.
  - It seems that diocesan clergy and staff lack the skills, bandwidth, and/or freedom from liability to address these needs in affected parishes
- Providing a safe space for affected persons to land where trauma can be addressed and resolved, and personal faith and God Image can be addressed openly
- Educational group for persons experiencing boundary violations with clergy: Stewardship of the Heart (outline available in handouts)
  - Class 1: Dynamics of Power, Abuse of Power, and how this can Affect our Image of God
  - Class 2: Elements of Dignity, Ways we are Tempted to Violate our Own and Others' Dignity
  - Class 3: How not to Take the Bait, Narcissism in Relationships, Self-Care, Forgiveness
  - Class 4: Building Resilience, Healthy Boundaries, Nurturing a Healthy God Image
- Maria Goretti Network – peer-led recovery and support groups for survivors of abuse

**WHAT'S NEEDED?**

- Growth in offering clinically-sound and Catholic-sound consultation, education, and psychotherapy
  - More consistency and visibility across the country – perhaps facilitated by communication among CPA members
- Sharing of resources, making connections between professional literature and these concerns to support clergy, laity, and general public who seek understanding and healing
- Willingness to step out of our comfort zones to meet the needs we see in our local area/diocese

CATHOLIC PSYCHOTHERAPY  
ASSOCIATION  
GERRY CRETE, PHD

What are we seeing?  
What are we doing? What's working?  
What's needed?

CLINICAL IMPRESSIONS

- Disillusionment with Church leadership and even the Roman Catholic Church
- Confusion about the issue: Clericalism? Paedophilia? Homosexuality? \$ and politics?
- Identity crisis: Leave the Church? Or focus on local community?
- Forms of protest by laity: Refusal to tithe, letter writing
- Clinical approach: Empathy and hope
  - Christ as head of the Church
  - Clients as part of the Body of Christ
  - Opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work in reforming and renewing His Church
  - Need for prayer (call to personal holiness, prayer for Church leadership at all levels)

OVERVIEW

- Clergy perspective
- Seminary assessment and formation
- Diaconal formation
- Laity: clinical impressions
- Role of the Catholic Psychotherapy Association
- 2020 Conference: Rebuild

DISCUSSION