

## Pastoral Staff Day 2018 Table Discussion Summary

The following is a summary taken from the notes of participants' conversations during the small group process at Pastoral Staff Day on September 26, 2018. We organized the notes by topic when applicable and divided them into questions or comments/advice to bishops from responses to the small group questions:

- “What would you most like to say or ask the bishops?”
- “What is it that you most want to see and hear from the bishops?”

We sent this invaluable feedback to the bishops and, together with feedback from other listening sessions throughout the Archdiocese, it will directly inform their responses to the crisis moving forward.

### Transparency

#### Questions:

- Who makes the decisions as to what is a “credible” accusation?
- Why is it so hard to be transparent? We are encouraged to go to reconciliation and yet we do not see honesty from the hierarchy.
- Are we in Baltimore completely transparent now with no more secret files or revelations that will shock us?
- How can we be more transparent? How can we “vet” our priests and religious leaders?
- Please be more transparent, even if we have to lose a number of priests who should not be priests and will have to deal with smaller numbers. (“If your eye sins, pluck it out...”)  
Are we able to “clean house”?
- Please be transparent. If you know of something or someone, please offer the information instead of waiting for a discovery or investigation. What is the honest story about our own archdiocesan bishops?
- How can we be more proactive and transparent now and in the future?
- What stops you from moving forward in transparency and openness? Today. Now.
- What is the real story with McCarrick? Who knew what and when? Wuerl? Pope Francis? It is very disturbing.
- Why didn't you ask the AG to investigate our handling of predatory behavior?
- Have we hidden priests here because of abuse?
- How will the Archdiocese's response reflect actions by the USCCB?
- Do you feel that there are people or long-standing issues present in our clergy and seminaries that need to be rooted out? How do you plan to accomplish that?
- If transparency is a key goal in dealing with the abuse crisis, and if there are current or previous clerics in the AOB that know of reported cases of abuse (e.g., Cardinal Keeler), then shouldn't we release those names now?
- What will you do to protect children from now on?
- What is the future plan and communication strategy? How do we communicate the way forward to parishes?
- What did you know about the cover up in the church? What are you going to do at the November Meeting?
- What are your plans for full disclosure and transparency?

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- How will you address or share with all of us average lay people the issue of corruption within the entire Catholic Church? How can we know if there is progress on that?
- Are we hiding anything?
- Why saving face instead of saving children? Open our records in the AOB. Why were priests allowed to serve here after being accused/moved from other dioceses?
- Is everything in the open now?
- Why were these issues hidden from the church?
- When is the Pope going to give an answer to the charges against him? The silence is deafening.
- Are your hands clean? If not, please step away now!
- What did you know before the PA report and did you have any part in the cover up?
- How many priests have been convicted and how many accused. What is the ratio of conviction to accused?
- Can the bishops proclaim to us that they have not abused anyone nor have any knowledge of abuse?

### Comments/Advice:

- Four percent of priests abused. I am afraid that 100 percent of bishops covered up when faced with credible allegations against priests!
- We must have full disclosure and full transparency.
- We need transparency but also prayer, fasting, and healing for the whole church to make our church better. I feel we are all called to make this the church Jesus called us to make it.
- Offer continued support as we go forward. Continue to be transparent rather than not talking about it.
- Plan to examine our own records. Plan to avoid cover-ups. Plan to keep children safe. I want to hear from Archbishop Lori, not a grand jury.
- Give us reassurance that our diocese will be transparent and open to all the reports.
- Be open. Recognize the wide range of emotions from your people. We are the People of God. Our responses are valid and true.
- Be brave, come forward, and be honest if there are undisclosed issues that we handled in a way that is not acceptable today.
- Publicize any investigation forwarded to legal authorities. Also, publicize the vast number of “Good Shepherds.”
- Lead with transparency. Glad we are open to cooperate with AG’s effort to review files.
- Please do all that you can to ensure complete transparency, and at the same time, give us a sense of hope that God is still in charge of all of this.
- Make a commitment to have transparency and action throughout the country.
- We need transparency and action quickly!
- The bishops should respond to those who are removing financial support from the Archdiocese. Where does the money go? (Ministries are affected.)
- Speak strongly against abuse. Don’t just refer to scandal, acknowledge those specifically who have suffered abuse and continue to suffer the effects.

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- Require the remaining 100 of 140 dioceses to disclose the names of those credibly accused.
- We need transparency and action.
- Be open about what will be done to help our people with their concerns.
- We need transparency. All files, information on abuse needs to be handed over to the AG, all of it. Not just what the church decides is relevant. Bishops need to be okay with a lay forensic team investigating all of it.
- Transparency - honesty - continued work to make sure the wrong people do not slip through the cracks.
- Communicate clearly to all, email distribution lists are inaccurate.
- Provide information that we can share on how the parish can support the Archdiocese and the worldwide Church.
- Admit guilt where it exists. Be more like shepherds instead of businessmen with carefully crafted PR statements to protect their reputation.
- Open everything up to government officials that has to do with the crimes. If we find out in ten years that nothing changed, I am concerned about people leaving church. Peoples' displeasure is with dioceses not churches.
- I want the bishops to report on any updates, changes in policy/new initiatives to the local parishes at least two times a month so we can stay up to date with the newest and latest information and changes. (Sometimes keeping up with regular news cycle is challenging.)
- Give us complete transparency!
- Transparency, honesty, and consistent communication. Give more truth to the parishioners, staff, public, etc. Look into changing the hierarchy of the church. There should be checks and balances for all: accountability.
- Take initiative. Don't wait for government authorities to look at cases or for the Pope's February meeting. Be transparent and publically address the scandal with apologies and penance, like making Fr. Lombardi's pilgrimage of penance known to the Church and community.
- Address effectively all the issues of the Catholic Church. We need full transparency now. I fear any covering up from here forth will be devastating.
- Be accountable, transparent, and stop blaming the victims.
- There should be more transparency with Catholic parishioners and the public in general. Get the word out, be upfront, and discuss improvements made since 2002. Be progressive and not reactionary.
- We need an explanation for McCarrick and all the rumors.

### Accountability

#### **Questions:**

- Is the Church working with local law enforcement on prosecution steps?
- How do you foresee bishops best holding the accused accountable?
- Why have no bishops in the U.S. resigned? Why are the rest of the bishops not confronting brother bishops?
- Can you please hold abusers/perpetrators accountable? How do you intend to hold them all accountable and get them out of public ministry?
- How will they be held accountable?
- What can be done with regard to Canon Law to address accountability?
- We need continued accountability and visibility. What is the action plan is for ministers at the parish level?
- If someone was acting out, are the bishops and others who are in authority going to call out those in ministry who are involved in these crimes or complicit publicly?

#### **Comments/Advice:**

- We need honesty, justice done, and accountability.
- Plan for action, Accountability
- Follow the example of the bishops of Chile.
- There must be systemic change in the hierarchy and structure of the Church. Those involved must resign.
- Action, the immediate removal of criminals.
- Make it our priority always to protect children and not the clergy and everyone who had knowledge and was involved in any way to any degree in the suppression will be released from duty if not already.
- Make a pledge to publically call for resignations at the USCCB meeting in November. Chief among these should be Cardinal Wuerl and Bishop Zubek.
- Make an admission of guilt if necessary and step down.
- Ensure just prosecution and jail for the guilty perpetrators.
- Excommunication of professed Catholics who bring public scandal by sponsoring, supporting and advocating legislation and policies that violate catholic teaching and God-ordained human sexuality.
- Priests who have documentation of mentally abusing parishioners should be removed and sent for help. Thanks for leading us with wisdom, keep praying!
- To be open and honest and make those who have done wrong and are found to be guilty to be held accountable, so we can renew our church and bring the trust back.
- Action, not just policies, and a firm ousting and defrocking of the homosexually active sub-cultures in various seminaries.
- We need clear and immediate steps for church reformation to happen immediately in the USA and very soon in the universal Church. All issues must be on the table.
- We need to hear that the bishops will never allow a cover-up like this to happen again and that they will be held accountable and remove predator priests with no retirement.

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- Remove those who need to be removed.
- Give humble recognition that change is needed and take responsibility.
- I want bishops to encourage Pope Francis to remove the bishops who made a mistake and not allow the bishops to resign.
- We need to hear that you will confront those who have neglected and committed these atrocities.
- That those perpetrators pay for their sins, should not be allowed retirement benefits.
- A solid plan to punish the priests who are proven guilty. They should be immediately removed from church duties.
- Accountability, transparency, stop blaming the victims.
- Please speak out loudly and clearly: pedophilia doesn't equal homosexuality. Pedophile priests should be removed from ministry but are never removed from the mercy of our God.

### Lay Involvement

#### **Questions:**

- How do you foresee laity assuming a larger but balanced role?
- I pray that clerics/pastors will respect lay ecclesial ministers with justice. For example, repeatedly co-workers are mistreated with the shock "your contract won't be renewed," with no prior discussion. Fear prevents opening all sacraments and church leadership to women. Is the Holy Spirit of God powerless in gifting women as men are?
- Please invite women to be part of the solution and involve them in the process. Why did the Archbishop's letter re the MD Attorney General's decision only go to pastors and deacons?
- How will the bishops change the structure of the church, its institution and governance?

#### **Comments/Advice:**

- Create structures in the church organization where laity has input and conversation with leadership.
- I would like us all to center on a servant church where there is no clericalism and to empower the laity more, especially in decision making.
- I think that any efforts to do anything positive must include lay people. There's a huge distrust of the Church hierarchy.
- Share your decision-making with lay persons. Focus on accompaniment and support. Bring pressure to bear on those who need to resign.
- The laity need to be given their power back for leadership in the church. The hierarchy should be in the service of the people, not themselves with the power to cover up for one another. We as church should not have to rely on civil government to make us do what is right.
- Commitment to have transparency and action throughout the country. We need lay people in leadership positions, particularly woman, and accountability.

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- Have more lay involvement in investigating and keeping abreast of allegations so they can be properly dealt with.
- Listen and be open to people.
- Bishops need to assure us that something will change in clericalism in the Church.
- I want to see change. I want to see a restructuring of the hierarchy and how the clergy interact with lay people both inside and outside the Church. I want us to reimagine how the laity, lay workers, and clergy work with each other. Our hierarchy would benefit from being open to the gifts of all.
- We want immediately a lay Board for the Archdiocese that acts, not just talks, with an audit of personnel files. Who is watching the bishop? (We have a process in place for us.) We need continued transparency; continued help and support for abuse victims; zero tolerance for abuse of any kind; removal of any person who has any charge of abuse and not re-assignment; continued availability to all of us; and total transparency. Don't alter files given to the AG of credible threats, it gives the illusion/opportunity that something could be hidden. The accused agency is not impartial and if it is choosing what is credible then there are too many questions.
- Need more involvement of laity in discussions and solutions.
- We need humility and honesty. Do not take charge of the investigation because that is self-serving. Find a way to truly have the investigation led by independent lay people with expertise in investigation. Do not hide perpetrators or send them to Rome. Have them face civil justice.
- Confront clericalism and work on changes in the hierarchy structures. It needs openness and inclusivity of all people called to shepherd the people of God.

### **Formation of Priests**

#### **Questions:**

- Are the priests getting support?
- How are you going to protect seminarians?
- How do we vet seminarians today? Does it continue through their priestly life? Are complicit bishops going to be asked to leave? Be bold! Stand up to brother bishops.
- What are we as an archdiocese doing right now and going forward? Need for prevention, new process, screening, educating priests, and more strict screening process.

#### **Comments/Advice:**

- We need better screening of seminarians.
- Make sure your priests are well formed. Do a complete psychological coeval. Abuse is emotional, mental as well as sexual. Priests with documented mental abuse of parishioners should be removed/sent for help. Thanks for leading us with wisdom. Keep praying!
- Focus on mental health of pastors and seminarians.
- Need high standards for the priesthood and a stronger vetting process.

### **Fairness to Victims**

#### **Questions:**

- What penance are you going to do? Stand with the animi - the victims. Lead healing services/masses.

#### **Comments/Advice:**

- We need active outreach to those who disclose they were abuse victims during listening sessions.
- Focus on the victims.
- Need healing and support for victims.
- Keep abuse victims in our prayers of the faithful and provide opportunities for coming together to heal.
- Acknowledging some of the sins, provide sympathy, and offer help to victims.

### **Sexual Abuse in the Church**

#### **Questions:**

- What are we doing to ensure the safety of church members?
- Within the Archdiocese of Baltimore, priests are fingerprinted once. Why do lay ecclesial ministers have to be fingerprinted multiple times if they are hired in two or more parishes over the years?
- How are accusations against priests handled?
- Why was everything covered up for so long? Why not cut this off when it first happened? It encouraged wrongful behavior.
- What is the root of the sexual abuse problems?
- As part of addressing the scandal, please point to the progress made already. Also, there are many forms of abuse in our society. How does the church help people who have suffered abuse in their family or workplace, and how do we purify our society?
- How did it all happen? What steps are being taken to prevent it?
- How are we going to take the safe measures?
- What are we doing to protect the children?
- What is being done presently in our diocese to communicate to our people about the recent reports of sexual accusations against our priests? What about false claims?
- Why do we still emphasis “child abuse” when most abuse seems to be post puberty? This would indicate another issue and problem!

#### **Comments/Advice:**

- Some of our brothers have hurt others in our church family. We expect that those of you who have the power to protect the innocent remove permanently the predators.

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- I have heard people point to homosexuality as the cause of the sexual abuse crisis. I want the bishops to understand homosexuality is not linked to child abuse.
- The sick priests are sick and that is sad, but my anger is focused on the bishops who knew better. The bishops are not psychologically sick, but the issue of power is at the heart of the problem.
- Be clear with the laity and the clergy that homosexuality is not cause of this crisis. Ask lay leadership to address this issue.
- Continue making sure that we have in place good measures for child protection.

### General Questions/Comments/Advice to Bishops

#### Questions:

- How can the “average parishioner” help to change the way things are done in the higher level of leadership? What do the parishioners need to prepare for if there is an investigation in the Archdiocese of Baltimore?
- Is the Church splitting over ideologies?
- Do you foresee a financial crisis for our diocese? If so, how will that effect those of us who support our families by working for the Church?
- How do we help the younger generation understand this so it does not happen again?
- Why did we get to this point?
- What is more important today for Archbishop Lori than this?
- How are you and the parishioners supposed to solve a world-wide problem like abuse? I know prayer is one way but I feel we need more. Parents and children need to be educated.
- How will these issues with the leaders of the church be prevented in the future?
- Why has there not been more focus on the spiritual side of this crisis, i.e., priests’ failures in celibacy, lay people’s failure to live the teachings of the Church, etc.?
- Have you personally had any part in covering up or moving a predator priest? How do we handle anger and rhetoric from people who are deeply hurt and just don’t want to hear what the church says?
- How is the church going to come back from this? I will not pay to defend these abusive priests.
- Where do we go from here? How do we heal? How are you doing?
- What did you learn about celibacy in the seminary?
- Is the Catholic faith treated with the same respect as other religions?
- What changes will we see as clergy and lay ministers? How do you/we reignite the spark of the Catholic faith in those who need it? How do we instill confidence in parishioners that things will be made right and that everything is being done to ensure this doesn’t happen again?
- Did we not learn anything from Nixon? The cover up is worse than the crime. It is clericalism and sexism at its worst.
- Why the cover up? We are all sinners and we make mistakes. If it had been handled properly, I suppose it would not be such a disaster now.



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- What changes in Canon Law are going to be made? (When and what). Do you agree the episcopal conferences need some power without referring to Rome?
- How are you doing? I think you all are handling this situation very well in listening responding and caring for the members of our diocese.
- How can we help you? We support you and pray for you.
- Why do we have a lot of young people leaving the Church?
- Why didn't this stop before it got this far?
- What concrete reforms will be instituted?
- What do you think will be the way forward?
- What positive changes can we expect from the Church hierarchy?
- How are we going to inform people about the hidden agenda of the media?
- The Archbishop had to leave for an important meeting, more important than this??
- What is your plan to regain trust?
- How we can best support you and the good priests in our Archdiocese?
- How are you doing? How are you caring for yourself?
- How are you? When will this end?
- Why was this possible? What were the root causes? How are you going to amend these causes/practices/policies or traditions that led to the crisis?
- Could you use the virtual town hall as a platform for catechizing people? Someone needs to respond to the comments officially, or it is as though you are not listening.
- Will you continue the "Be Missionary Disciples" effort?
- Millennials are a lot smarter than our generation and question everything in detail. How are you going to respond to them? They will want action not talk.

### Comments/Advice:

- We need accountability and openness.
- Pay attention to tone. The people want to hear humility and contrition above anything else.
- Thank you for taking action. Speak strongly. Thank you for cooperation with the AG office.
- Please listen to what the Church, the people have to say and their desire to make our Church stronger and more faithful.
- I want to support the mission of the AOB, which is why the Catholic Church needs to have directives.
- Thank you for not sweeping this under the rug and providing so many opportunities to hear from the Church in Baltimore. Now, it is time to allow for healing through moving on. We should always address the needs that are brought forth, but we also need to recognize the need to move ahead. There is so much good to focus on. Let's focus on that.
- Keep us informed as to the process and direction the church and diocese is going.
- Change Archbishop's Appeal to "Shame Life" or similar. Have a national searchable database for credibly accused clergy and laity.
- Be careful of use of language "homosexuality" and "same-sex attraction" and "actively living gay lifestyle".

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- Encourage newly ordained bishops to step up and take leading roles in November USCCB meeting. Newer bishops do not suffer as much from lack of credibility/trust.
- An email I sent to our Archbishop says to be thankful the abuse is now public, and asks for justice for children and to preserve the image of the Church.
- Trust needs to be restored. Bishops need a new sense of humility
- Lay out your plan to bring people to Christ without jargon/doubletalk
- Send more money to parishes for young adult ministry!
- We need a system of checks and balances
- Let's go and make good headlines about our Church.
- As a member of a parish (pastoral staff member) I feel like my voice, and the concern for people in my role has not been a priority. We see, hear and minister daily with folks who are mad, hurt and confused about our church.
- Shame on you if you were complicit in any way. Stop the biggest and oldest old-boy network.
- Put Jesus in the center of everything. "Who am I to judge."
- We need to be prepared for the next round.
- Failure to excommunicate Catholics who persist in public scandal confuses the faithful and lends a perception that sexual behaviors - fornication, cohabitation, abortion, homosexuality, are no longer immoral. Elected Catholics who openly support legislation and policies contrary to Catholic teaching excommunicate themselves and this should be publicly acknowledged.
- Praying for the bishops and for those who need to leave public ministry, there are consequences to bad choices.
- Married priesthood.
- Publications and support letters have been sent to the priests and deacons. Has a thought been given to offering the same level of support to the parish staff employees? We are a part of the Church team and are in need of such.
- I can understand that people sin, but to cover the sins up - is really heart wrenching. I am disappointed in my Church.
- Evil has infiltrated our church! Prayer is so important but we need to put on our armor and go to fight this battle. Please tell every parish to say the prayer to St. Michael after every Mass - not only daily Masses.
- Possibly get PR firm to clean up vague areas. Discuss check points in place and ongoing improvements.
- We are praying for the bishops.
- What do we expect when the Church is so many ways has a "wink and nod" approach about what is good, beautiful and true about Christ and his Church. Fidelity. We are praying for you and our priests.
- You cannot put new wine in old wineskins! Need to see this as a Good Friday moment and spend time outside the tomb before God brings new life from death.
- We are on your team and we need to know that every word that is spoken and every policy put in place is put there solely under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For the sake of your flock, I beg holiness of you. We need you to be holy and courageous, be men who are worthy to lead this team of ministers and the Church at large. Be bold and stand firm in the truths of our faith.

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- Please consider starting a support group for those who suffered abuse at the hand of clergy. I have also noticed people who put clergy on pedestals. Redirect these people to who they should focus on.
- Action. Status quo is not good enough!
- How will change happen? Work to bring back the trust.
- I think the bishops are doing a very good job handling things during these hard times.
- Don't share the "should haves," that is a past we cannot change it, but the "how we will learn, grow and be better in the future."
- Transparency, accountability and penance.
- Authentic apology - which I felt we have had in Baltimore, but not everywhere. Authenticity, compassion, not false positivity ignoring the struggle of this uncertainty, intellectual honesty. A call to holiness.
- They are in a symbolic position. I would like to hear and see and dramatic and powerful statement and process of visible change. Bishops should be obvious moral leaders and in the global sense. I don't feel we see that, we need to see absolute commitment to transparency and openness and positive moral leadership and reparation.
- Move focus of abuse of children to other situations in which persons are manipulated by those with power over them and "rewards" for not reporting sick situations.
- Ministry: address young adults more! Scandal: investigation one on one with YAM. Bishops come out to parishes.
- Continue to do the wonderful work you are doing.
- We need this support and love; it's hard to be on the front lines.
- We need strong, human, vulnerable, leadership.
- Acts of contrition and penance. Help to keep the issues separated: child abuse, homosexuality, and sexual harassment.
- Lead us in change and take realistic look at transforming church into evangelical power house for next 1,000 years.
- Know you are in our prayers.
- Truth, not platitudes.
- Don't only address the crisis, but be out and still frequently being our bishops as they are!
- Like Dr. Sri said, we want to see Jesus in you! You can help us to show Jesus to others through us.
- I want the bishops to model Christ in pursuing holiness and refusing to allow the church to be compromised by our greater cultural agenda, which pressures everyone to accept homosexuality as normal.
- Your support of all of us in the trenches and your prayers.
- Openness, truth, compassion
- I want to know and be reassured that the church will survive the crisis that plagues our church today.
- What concrete and effective changes is dealing with the situation.
- Continued leadership. Be out front. Be present.
- Humility, holiness, and authentically orthodox Catholicism. We know you must be tired and we are praying for you.
- A word of faith and hope beyond anger and sorrow, considered action is important now. Be good stewards of the people entrusted to your pastoral care and leadership.

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- Openness, rebuild trust, get into the parishes
- Act; do not just speak words. Do not just say what we want to hear, but actually act on it.
- I believe we need to stake out our place in public discussions or social media. I applaud the use of Flocknote this past week to ask us questions. More of that please!
- Get this mess cleaned up. Stop judging everyone else. Stop bragging about what you think you have achieved and get real. Leave the BS behind.
- Apology! Hopefulness for the future. The truth and nothing but the truth. Be repentant, humble, and hopeful!