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Istituto di Antropologia

How the Church is responding to the call to “personal and communal conversion in Safeguarding”

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Content

- 1. On the spot: the Church**
- 2. Clericalist attitude**
- 3. Perceptions of survivors**
- 4. Paradoxes**
- 5. A way forward:**
 - Structural Consequences**
 - Theological & Pastoral Principles**
 - Spiritual Lessons**

1. On the spot: the Church

- Shockwaves: the “double crises”
- CIASE; Munich; Portugal; Spain
- Increasing focus on abuse of adults (seminarians, women) and abuse of religious women
- „They don’t get it“ – „How could this happen and be covered for so long?!“
- Target: Bishops, Cardinals, Pope → the untouchable become the target
- 1,4 B Catholics, 24 Churches, 5300 bishops, 2900 dioceses, ??? n. of Religious Congregations; Vatican: universal oversight – vastly understaffed; Dicasteries

2. Clericalist attitude

I represent
Christ and
His Church.

Nobody
shall
criticize
me.

The media
attacks are a
sure sign
that we are
following
the
Crucified.

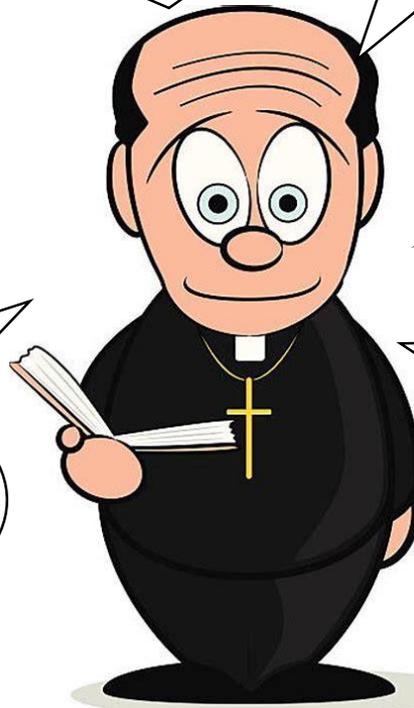
The world
simply does
not under-
stand us.

I don't need
anybody tell
me what I
should do.

My vocation is to
serve.

I can take whatever
I wish. I have
renounced to so
much.

I don't need to justify
myself. I am
accountable to God
alone.



3. Perceptions of survivors

Never ever has anybody listened to me story and my hurt.

I don't know to whom I can turn to for support.

I am livid that they push away their responsibility.

I have struggled long enough, I give up.

If only I had not been so powerless!

I felt so dirty and guilty.

I had blind trust in Father X. I couldn't imagine that he could do anything evil.

If only they had the courage to confess their crimes and do justice to us!



4. Paradoxes



- In the Church at the same time
 - victims *and* perpetrators
 - prosecutors *and* superiors who cover-up
 - safeguarders *and* those who downplay, deny
- *One Church* \leftrightarrow Very little passing on of experience and expertise from one local church to other.
- Clericalism among clerics and ... non-clerics
- Power: authoritarian, role-bound \leftrightarrow diffuse, contested: lack of structure, accountability & clear rules one of the reasons for abuse & cover-up (Deetman NL)
- Danger of “ticking off” obligations = getting rid of uncomfortable area of concern
- Dealing with past = poor *versus* Safeguarding = good

5. Structural consequences



→ Holding together *contra* splitting:

- Norms *and* Attitudes
- Law *and* Spirituality/ Theology
- Justice *and* Mercy
- Care for Children *and* Adult Persons at risk
- Clergy *and* “Laity”
- Specialists *and* “Laity”
- Dioceses *and* Religious Orders
- Government/ State institutions *and* Church hierarchy

Communion – unity in diversity: respect, listening, new asceticism, building bridges

5. Theological & Pastoral Principles

- “When is this going to be over so we can get back to our real ministries?” →
“*This* is our real ministry. This is what God is calling us to today – care for victims.”
“We forgot that victims are part of our flock too.”
- Accountability; *Vos estis lux mundi*
- Co-Responsibility, not by-standers.
- What can we foster a culture of constructive debate and of transparency?
- Why do we (continue) what we do?

5. Spiritual Lessons



- How do we deal with our own resistances, uncomfortableness or questions (around sexuality, faith, Church leadership etc.) as well as with Safeguarding fatigue?
- Where is the space for survivors in our midst?
- What is at the centre of our attention: our institutions, our reputation (avoid scandal!) etc. or the victim, the vulnerable, the other and the Other, God?
- What do Dignity and Care mean to us and for/in our ministries?

- Global E-learning training and qualification centre for pastoral professions with multicultural and interdisciplinary issues responding to the sexual abuse of children;
languages: French, English, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian
- Diploma and Licentiate (Master) in Safeguarding; Doctorates
- Research and conferences

Thank you for your attention!



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