

In the Vineyard

April 6, 2006

“We are yours. We ask for the strength and wisdom to move forward, to act humbly and powerfully in building up your reign in this troubled world, in our troubled Church.”

Opening words of Prayer for Accountability, part of the VOTF Palm Sunday reflection

LEAD STORIES:

- April 9/**Palm Sunday Prayer Vigil** – join thousands of fellow Catholics, from wherever you may be on Palm Sunday. [Click here](#).
- **Good news** from the USCCB web site: Nearly 89 percent (or 169) of the 191 Catholic dioceses or eparchies (dioceses of the Eastern Catholic Church) which were audited during 2005 were found to be in full compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. **Bad news**: One of these **was** Chicago; one **was not** Manchester, NH.
- A letter sent to the US Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Sambi (see Commentary “Dear Archbishop Sambi”) profiles in one text a chronology of disdain in the Manchester, NH diocese; *Manchester Union Leader* editorial reprinted with permission in Commentary – “When a Bishop Fails”.
- Audit results on US diocesan progress in protecting children raise concerns among many, including the chairperson of the **National Review Board Dr. Patricia Ewers** who spoke to the VOTF SW Florida affiliate on April 4. [See recap in the April 20 *Vineyard*]; read more in “What Does Compliance Look Like?” under Diocese/State Watch.
- **VOTF Campaigns for Accountability** have new pages on our web site; see “Victories in the Vineyard” – a compilation of just a few successes and case studies where the lay voice was heard; try our USER-FRIENDLY activism via the list of VOTF contacts by state for each of the two campaigns.
- Voice of the Ordained and VOTF working together on Long Island: see Diocese/State Watch – New York.
- Another instance of **banning as policy** in the Bridgeport, CT diocese: See Diocese/State Watch for VOTF Bridgeport, CT and Commentary “No Small Thing”.

NATIONAL News

It’s 2006 in the Catholic Church: Do you know where your voice is? Every Catholic in the US has a **VOTF National Representative Council** representative. Find your region, your rep and your place in VOTF.

Check the VOTF web site home page for new “news” – press releases, Campaign for Accountability link and more; the radio program “Interfaith Voices” recently featured VOTF executive director Ray Joyce and VOTF Arlington, VA co-chair Bill Casey. Earlier on the same program, VOTF secretary Gaile Pohlhaus joined

researcher/sociologist Bill D'Antonio. You can hear both programs by clicking on our home page link at www.votf.org

While compliance audit results are the most important gauge Catholics can use to measure how the Church is protecting children, the mounting cost of the cover up is another gauge – of financial means. See “The Ongoing Cost of Abuse Cover Ups” in Commentary.

DIOCESE/State Watch –

WHAT Does Compliance Look Like? Audit results on Charter compliance in US dioceses beg Job’s question, “How long, Lord – how long?” Note: 104 of the 195 American dioceses conducted a "self-audit." In previous years, teams from the Gavin Group, a private firm led by former FBI agent William Gavin, had conducted on-site audits in all participating dioceses. See *News-Journal* coverage at http://www.news-journal.com/nation/content/shared-gen/ap/National/Church_Abuse_Audits.html. See the USCCB web site for the full “Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” at www.usccb.org; also check the *National Catholic Reporter* service “Abuse Tracker” at <http://www.ncrnews.org/abuse/>.

Manchester, New Hampshire –From the *New Hampshire Eagle Tribune*: “Yesterday's release of the state's first audit of the Manchester Catholic Diocese's sexual-abuse prevention efforts raises once again the question of why the church allows John B. McCormack to continue as bishop. His central role in the clergy sex-abuse scandal taints the moral authority of his position. He should do the right thing and resign.” And later in the editorial, “The need for a change in leadership is underscored by some of the audit findings reported yesterday. Three years after the settlement, the Manchester Diocese is still not doing things as basic as making sure criminal background checks are run on everyone who works with children.”

- Background – According to www.wmur.com: “The audits were a key part of a 2002 settlement between the state and the diocese that ended a criminal investigation of whether church officials knew priests were molesting children, but failed to protect them over a period of decades.” And: “As part of the agreement, prosecutors agreed not to seek criminal indictments against the church. In exchange, the diocese agreed to enact strict new child protection policies, admit its actions had harmed children, and open itself to audits. [Attorney General] Ayotte said the audit found that no church ‘site’ checked was in full compliance with child-protection policies. In one parish, nearly half of the employees or volunteers had no criminal record checks.”
- From the April 2 *Concord Monitor*: “The fate of the youngest members of the Roman Catholic Church in New Hampshire is now in the hands of parishioners. The leadership of the Diocese of Manchester remains in denial about its history of child sex abuse by priests and its responsibility to ensure that more children won't be scarred for life.” Go to http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_action=doc&p_docid=110C2314F37C0DC0&p_docnum=1.

- This may be the first time most readers will have read a *case based on canon law* that argues for the removal of a bishop. Go to the New Hampshire Catholics for Moral Leadership web site at <http://www.nhcatholics.org/download3May2005.htm>.

Chicago and Joliet, IL - The apologetic Cardinal George seems to be doing everything right, so what's wrong? Let us know what you think at pthorp.ed@votf.org.

- In response to withering criticism over the breakdown in Chicago of the USCCB Charter, Cardinal George has initiated additional safeguards, as well as other actions demanded by VOTF Chicago. Go to the archdiocesan web site at <http://www.archdiocese-chgo.org/>.
- Read VOTF Chicago's communication to the Cardinal at www.votf-nschi.org.
- See VOTF president Mary Pat Fox update on the VOTF Chicago affiliate's deliberations in Commentary – "VOTF and Cardinal George."
- "In August, a mother reported that McCormack had molested her 8-year-old son twice when he was alone with the priest after mass. Hearing of the allegation, archdiocese officials told McCormack he was not to be alone with children and designated another priest to monitor him. Days later, when the monitor went out of town on Labor Day weekend, McCormack took three boys to Minnesota on a shopping trip...When the monitor left again briefly over Christmas, McCormack allegedly abused another boy." *Chicago Tribune, April 2, 2006*

VOTF New Hampshire's Carolyn Disco said recently, "**There is no more stunning evidence of the inadequacy of the USCCB audits than the finding of compliance by Chicago.** How meaningless the Gavin Group's work is, especially since they have no right to see personnel files." (The *Washington Times* noted, "The problem, said Bill Gavin, head of the Boston-based Gavin Group, which conducts annual 'audits' on Catholic dioceses, is that his investigators are not allowed to research personnel files.") [See the April 7 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* "Priest personnel files may be open to auditors."]

Carolyn's remarks were confirmed last week when Dr. Patricia Ewers, the head of the USCCB's National Review Board said that the audits' shortcomings are especially clear in Chicago. An Associated Press article noted that the archdiocese was in full compliance, even though "it failed to remove an accused priest from church work for four months last year until he was criminally charged. Ewers called the situation 'a great sorrow and disappointment to all of us.'"

<http://washingtontimes.com/national/20060331-121834-5695r.htm>

- **Joliet, IL:** Bishop Imesch not only apologized to parishioners in his diocese for offensive language spoken by him in a deposition last year (in a lawsuit filed against the Joliet diocese), he has promised to post on the diocesan web site the names of 'diocesan priests against whom a credible allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor has been made.'" Go to the *Beacon News* at http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/beaconnews/city/2_1_AU02_DIOCESE_S1.htm.

Ohio: From the *Columbus Dispatch* at www.columbusdispatch.com, “The Senate gave final approval yesterday to a House-passed bill that requires church officials to report suspected instances of abuse and creates an Internet registry of unconvicted sex offenders who are found liable in a civil case. After heavy lobbying by Ohio Catholic bishops, the House stripped a provision that would have given victims a one-year window, or look-back, to file a lawsuit for child sex abuse that occurred as long ago as 35 years.”

VOTF Maryland: The long and heated battle toward justice for victims of clergy sexual abuse to the best of a legislature’s ability has been won, but not by survivors. The *Washington Post* reported: “In a legislative victory for the Roman Catholic church, Maryland delegates rejected a bill that would have allowed older victims of child sexual abuse to sue the church and the priests who abused them. Instead, the House Judiciary Committee on Friday, and the House on Saturday, approved a bill that would allow victims 25 and younger when the law takes effect to file lawsuits until they reach age 42. Maryland law currently allows victims to bring lawsuits until their 25th birthday. There is no time limit for criminal prosecutions of those who sexually abuse a child in Maryland. Under intense lobbying from the church, the bill was amended so the time extension does not apply to victims who are now 25 and older.”

New York:

- Rockville Center diocese/**VOTF Long Island** letter responds to the Voice of the Ordained – read the letter written by VOTF Long Island to the priests’ association whose members offered to mediate differences between VOTF and Rockville Center’s Bishop Murphy. Go to www.votf-li.org; VOTF Long Island is also conducting a Diocesan Finance Council petition drive on the weekends of April 29/30 and May 6/7. The petition is on their web site.
- Announcements of closings (biggest in 150 years) and reconfigurations in the **Archdiocese of New York** have drawn every response from stunned silence to plans for fighting the closings. Subscribers can see *New York Times* coverage at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/29/nyregion/29church.html>.

Denver, CO: In the previous *Vineyard*, readers learned that HB 1088 won bishops support after a provision was cut (lengthening the statute of limitations for the filing of civil cases). The amended bill would lift the SOL on crimes against children committed after July 1, 1996. Denver SNAP reports that HB 1088, lifting the SOL on criminal prosecution, passed the full Senate. The amended bill again passed the House.

- The Senate committee hearing arguments on HB 1090 (lifting the *civil* SOL and, among other provisions, eliminating silent settlements and the withholding of records) has moved the bill to the full Senate.
- Colorado’s Catholic bishops opposed both bills.

New Jersey: The *Star Ledger* reported a disturbing incident involving a laicized priest living in a family community: “Paterson Diocese officials, who have been criticized for not properly notifying law enforcement about [the former priest’s] sex abuse, say that because Hanley is now laicized, they are not responsible for telling his new neighbors about his past.” See www.nj.com and click on *Star Ledger*.

- VOTF NJ had good news recently: Theresa Padovano writes, “On Jan. 5, 2006, Governor Richard Codey signed Bill S5540/A2512 into law, retroactively repealing Charitable Immunity protections for all institutions which fail to protect our children from sexual predators. The Legislature was clear: Charitable Immunity was never meant to protect institutions over the right of our children to be safe from sexual abuse. VOTF/NJ was cited as instrumental in helping this to happen. By way of letters to the editors, press conferences and demonstrations at the State House in Trenton, NJ, VOTF has participated with SNAP, HOST and other supportive agencies in the efforts of FixTheLaw.org to push for this legislation.”
- Visit the VOTF New Jersey web site at www.votfnj.org for a recap of their March 25 panel discussion of “Whose Money Is IT? Financial Accountability in the Church.”

Burlington, VT: An accused priest (against whom, records show, concerns had been noted as far back as the 1960s) “has avoided criminal prosecution in Vermont and Massachusetts, where he is accused of numerous similar offenses, because of statutes of limitation laws.” According to the *Rutland Herald*, “Accusers, however, can press charges through civil lawsuits.” See <http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060402/NEWS/604020397>.

Bridgeport, CT: Joe O’Callaghan of VOTF Bridgeport, CT reports that the upcoming April 29 talk with Fr. Richard McBrien of Notre Dame University VOTF co-sponsored with Fairfield University is not welcome news at the diocesan newspaper. See Commentary – “No Small Thing”.

IRELAND: *Catholic World News* reports “Irish Commission to Probe Dublin Sexual-Abuse Complaints” at <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=43232>.

SURVIVOR Community News –

The March 23 issue of *In the Vineyard* included edited text of a commentary “A New Commandment – Honor Thy Children” written by survivor Kathy Dwyer. Kathy objected to the edits. We apologize to Kathy and other survivors offended in any way by the edits made. Kathy has offered: “If they would like to read the unedited version, they can either contact me directly at wolfkmd@aol.com or go to my web site at www.kathleenmdwyer.com where I will post it on the home page for the next month or so.” While you’re on Kathy’s site, be sure to read about her book *Healing into Wholeness* and view her artwork.

CALENDAR WATCH:

- **VOTF Bridgeport, CT/Fairfield University:** APRIL 29 “THE ELECTION OF BISHOPS: RETURN TO TRADITION” with University of Notre Dame

professor of theology Richard McBrien. For details, go to www.votfbpt.org. Also, read Commentary – “No Small Thing”.

- Sunday, April 23, 2006, from 4:00-5:00 pm: "The World, the Flesh and the Catholic Church" - a special presentation by Eugene Kennedy at Trinity Catholic High School Auditorium, sponsored by Our Lady's Friends and Our Lady Help of Christians Justice and Peace Committee to benefit the Rev. Walter H. Cuenin Scholarship Endowment Fund at Trinity Catholic High School. Trinity H.S. is located at 575 Washington St., Newton, MA adjacent to Our Lady Help of Christians. Ample parking. Refreshments following presentation. Tickets \$10 in advance/\$12 at the door; checks payable to Our Lady's Friends can be mailed to Our Lady's Friends, P.O. Box 600521, Newtonville, MA 02460. Reservations will be held at the door - please provide the names for all parties in your group for which you are purchasing tickets.

Site-Seeing, Etc.

- FutureChurch is launching a postcard campaign calling for women preachers in a general call for full ministerial equality in the Church. The organization offers outstanding resources for education, discussion, prayer and reflection. Their latest effort is planned to coincide with the release of the movie “The DaVinci Code,” which is based on the controversial book of the same name by Dan Brown. FutureChurch and many other Catholics are concerned over the portrait of Mary Magdalene as well as the image it projects of women in Church leadership.
- *America* magazine, March 27, 2006, looks at the “implications for the US Church of the bankruptcy proceedings in Portland, OR and Spokane, WA”; the editorial takes on the Newman Club for defining Catholic identity in the negative - read “Measuring Catholic Identity.”
- The Boston College Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (IREPM) is sponsoring a summer conference "Prophetic Witness: Catholic Women's Strategies for Reform" as well as a daylong celebration of its 35th Anniversary entitled "Creating the Church Women Want." The Conference Week course will be held from 6:30-9:30 pm from July 10-14, 2006 and the 35th Anniversary Day will be held on Saturday, July 15, 2006 from 9:00 am - 4:30 pm. Additional details can also be found at www.bc.edu/irepm.
- Villanova University: The College of Commerce and Finance is pleased to announce the opening of the Center for the Study of Church Management on Wednesday, March 22, 2006. The Villanova center, led by Economics Professor Charles Zech, is the first of its kind in the world. It is unique in that it is dedicated to the service of the Catholic Church in the United States through education and research. The mission of the center is to provide education and scholarship on fiscal and management matters in service of Catholic Church leaders. For more details, visit <http://www.cf.villanova.edu/centers/cscm/>.
- What NOT to do if your parish is closing – See the April 7 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* at http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2006b/040706/040706j.php.
- Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) web site offers a wide range of social scientific studies about the Catholic Church at <http://cara.georgetown.edu/aboutcara.htm>.

What do you think? The Los Angeles, CA diocesan web site posted the following recently: "In the wake of the sexual abuse scandal, some laypeople have suggested that the faith and the Church are quite different entities. For example, members of the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) say Catholics can accept the faith but also question the policies and practices of the Church. This view is clearly expressed in VOTF's slogan 'Keep the faith, change the Church.'" Read the whole article "Is there a gap between the faith and the Church?" by Purdue University sociologist James Davidson at <http://www.the-tidings.com/2006/0324/signs.htm>. The question is a good one and we'd like to hear your thoughts at pthorp.ed@votf.org.

BOOK Review – Ron DuBois, VOTF National Representative Council member (Region)
The Democracy of God: An American Democracy by Robert J. Willis (2006).

COMMENTARY

"Dear Archbishop Sambini" – James Farrell, NH Catholics for Moral Leadership
"VOTF and Chicago" – VOTF president Mary Pat Fox
"Rising Cost of Abuse Cover Ups"
"Introducing Dr. Ewers to Abp. Bruskewitz" – editorial
"No Small Thing" – VOTF Bridgeport, CT

QUOTES for our time: *National Catholic Reporter* asked that Cardinal George "use the bully pulpit of Chicago, his elected position within the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the respect he enjoys both in the United States and in Rome to press for the kind of disclosure and honest reckoning that would finally demonstrate that:

- The church is at heart a sacramental community that believes in confession and forgiveness;
- The church believes that the truth will set us free;
- Church leaders have the best interests of the community, particularly those most harmed by the scandal, at heart;
- Church leaders are willing to investigate the clerical/hierarchical culture in which this cancerous scandal took hold and in which it spread and to make the changes necessary to bring transparency and accountability to that structure."

Also from *National Catholic Reporter*, March 31, 2006: "For many of the victims, it takes tens of years to acknowledge to themselves the toll it has exacted on their life," said Steven Krueger, spokesman for the Coalition to Reform Sex Abuse Laws in Massachusetts. "It is one of the only crimes where the victim internalizes the guilt and the shame."

BOOK Review

The Democracy of God: An American Democracy

Robert J. Willis

In his classic work *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville favorably contrasted the democracy he observed in America with the monarchies he had experienced in Europe. Robert Willis quotes extensively from Tocqueville in making a case for democracy in the American Catholic Church. Willis draws on four themes in Tocqueville's work in making his case: separation of church and state, sovereignty of the people, administrative decentralization, and equality of citizens. In fact, he divides the chapters in the book into these four topics, with an opening chapter on the seeds of democracy in the early American Catholic Church.

The efforts of Bishop John Carroll and Bishop John England to adapt the Church in America to the democratic culture of this new country occupy much of the first chapter. Although many of us know something of these two men, Willis provides us with a more comprehensive picture of their efforts to stave off control from Rome by quoting extensively from their writings. We hear of Carroll's extended (and minimally successful) battle with Rome to allow priests in America to elect their own bishops. And we read of England's crafting of a Diocesan Constitution including a call for an annual Convention of all priests and elected lay delegates. There is also an interesting treatment of Trusteeship and the Schism in the early American Church.

But the bulk of the book focuses on the four themes mentioned above. Willis leaves no doubt about his position as he criticizes the monarchical form of government exercised in the Church. Since the book was published in 2006, Willis points to all of the current issues facing the Church in the U.S. that are familiar to all members of Voice of the Faithful, including, but not confined to, the sexual abuse crisis. He points to the encroachment of the Church into politics as a violation of the separation of Church and State. He rails against the centralization that has occurred, especially under Pope John Paul II, which violates the autonomy that rightly belongs to the bishops and to the collegiality of bishops' conferences. And he calls for a greater concern for unity in the Church as opposed to the current emphasis on uniformity.

Based on *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, he argues that the sovereignty of the people is upheld in the concept that the Church is the People of God. Bishops and priests are first of all, by their baptism, members of the People of God, and their roles of service to the people should be determined by the people. Related to this is the concept of equality of the people that Tocqueville saw as the bedrock of American democracy. Interestingly enough, Tocqueville observed that, in spite of the role of the Pope, Catholics in the new country had a far greater sense of equality than most of their Protestant brothers (and sisters).

As a psychotherapist for many years, Willis calls on this experience to speak to the stages of development to human maturity to describe the maturing of the American Catholic. The Church in the U.S. today is blessed with thousands of well educated and faithful Catholics who are eager for, and have a right to, a greater voice in the governance of the

Church in America. Willis also draws on this same psychotherapist experience to describe the pathologies of a Church locked into a hierarchical structure, with a closed clerical culture, and one that has little to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Willis speaks for many of us in calling for a transformation in the American Church. He ends with a call for a Bill of Rights for the American Church. Drawing on the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, he identifies ten rights that would transform the American Church into a Democracy of God. The affirmation of these rights would call for Church leadership that, rather than seeking to control people, focuses on bringing people to a deeper love of God. He seeks "Christian leadership that concerns itself primarily and essentially with helping others, Christians and non-Christians alike, to discover in their own experience the saving presence of a loving God." *Ron DuBois, VOTF Boston, MA and NRC representative from Region 1*

COMMENTARY – VOTF and Cardinal George

LETTER to the National Representative Council from VOTF president Mary Pat Fox:

Dear Friends,

The five Chicago affiliates met on Sunday afternoon March 26th. At this meeting they reached a consensus to meet with Cardinal George. The meeting is currently set for May 12th and they are continuing to work on moving up the meeting. Cardinal George suggested the meeting instead of a written response to their latest letter.

As you may know the individual Chicago affiliates have sent letters to the Cardinal since January and have been working on this correspondence since early December. In the last letter, from all five affiliates, that was sent March 1st and posted on their web site at www.votf-nschi.org, they included several calls for action including: support for the extension of the statute of limitations legislation in all cases of sexual abuse of minors; posting on the Archdiocesan website the names of the known, proven or credibly accused perpetrators of clergy and religious sexual abuse; and the publication on their web site of the Defenbaugh and Childers reports investigating the Charter breakdown in Chicago. So far Cardinal George has posted a list of abusers (we are not sure if the list is comprehensive) and he has posted his policies and procedures as well as the Defenbaugh and Childers reports and recommendations on the website. There is more to be done.

I participated in a conference call with the leadership team from the Chicago affiliates. They discussed their plans to work together using the direct-action training that VOTF has been providing to develop their agenda and conduct the meeting. The goal of the meeting with Cardinal George is to engage the Archdiocese in working with the laity to implement substantive change in the processes and procedures to provide a safe environment for children throughout the Church in Chicago and to ensure that the process for identifying and removing abusers is fully implemented.

The Chicago affiliates are working very hard to live VOTF's three goals at the same time. I know there has been much discussion in the past weeks about whether or not we can impact change in the Church. Some say that we cannot do this from the outside – that it has to come from the inside. Here is a situation where the Cardinal has offered to meet with Voice of the Faithful, has admitted he was wrong, has apologized, is taking responsibility for what has happened and has already met some of the demands of the local affiliates. Our third goal originally came into being because we, VOTF, wanted to work to eliminate the possibility of this type of crisis and behavior happening again in our Church. We have not been successful yet. I continue to believe that for us to be successful the laity must be engaged in the process. The laity involved in such a process must be genuinely representative of the laity rather than handpicked and appointed as we have today. The Chicago affiliates are working toward this goal. We need to support them.

In addition the steering committee of the NRC and I will be discussing the Chicago situation.

The audit of compliance with the Charter to Protect Children and Young People has been released; you can find the reports at www.usccb.org. Chicago passed the audit and as a result, if the world did not know before, we know now that the self-audits are not working. We need to fix the system. I encourage you to use this information as you work on the campaigns for Accountability *Now* and your ongoing actions in your local affiliates.

Introducing Dr. Patricia Ewers to Archbishop Bruskewitz

Dr. Patricia O'Donnell Ewers, Chairperson of the National Review Board of the USCCB, accepted an invitation from VOTF of SW Florida (Naples) to participate in an open forum with Catholics and others concerned about the compliance of the U.S. Bishops with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. (We will recap this April 4 gathering in the April 20 *Vineyard*.) Earlier in the week, CatholicWorldNews.com quoted a statement released by Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of the Lincoln, Nebraska diocese:

“Some woman named Patricia O'Donnell Ewers, who is the Chair of something called ‘A National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People,’ has said that her Board ‘calls for strong fraternal correction of the Diocese of Lincoln.’ The Diocese of Lincoln has nothing to be corrected for, since the Diocese of Lincoln is and has always been in full compliance with all laws of the Catholic Church and with all civil laws. Furthermore, Ewers and her Board have no authority in the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Lincoln does not recognize them as having any significance.”

Bishop Bruskewitz is a member of the USCCB, which created the National Review Board. Dr. Ewers is its current chair. The Lincoln, Nebraska diocese failed in the

USCCB-mandate that calls for audits on every US diocese for their compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The reason for the failure is that the Lincoln, Nebraska diocese refused to participate and simply does not recognize the NRB. So who is protecting children in the Catholic schools, churches and rectories of Lincoln?

The Ongoing Cost of Abuse Cover-ups
from Associated Press at www.newsjournal.com

[Also see Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) web site for a wide range of social scientific studies about the Catholic Church at <http://cara.georgetown.edu/aboutcara.htm>.]

“The church sexual abuse crisis cost Catholic dioceses and religious institutes nearly \$467 million last year in settlements to victims, legal expenses, therapy, and training, a staggering amount in the aftermath of the abuse scandal that surfaced in 2002, according to an independent audit released yesterday by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The data, collected by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, also showed that 783 new and credible allegations of sexual abuse by clergy were reported last year, down from 1,092 allegations reported in 2004 and bringing the total number of accusations to more than 12,000 nationwide since 1950.

While the number of allegations is decreasing, the financial cost to the church increased over the last year due to some large settlements paid in 2005, said Teresa M. Kettelkamp, director of the USCCB's Office of Child and Youth Protection. The church paid more than \$399 million last year in settlements alone, and spent \$67 million more on therapy for victims, legal fees, and counseling for offenders, according to the data.

The audit's results bring the total cost of the church sexual abuse crisis to nearly \$1.2 billion, not including undisclosed payments the church made during 2003 and this year.”

DEAR Archbishop Sambini
by James M. Farrell

[James Farrell is a communications professor at University of New Hampshire and a founding member of New Hampshire Catholics for Moral Leadership. The following is the text of a letter written to the US Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Pietro Sambini.]

I write to draw your attention to recent developments concerning the episcopal leadership of Bishop John B. McCormack of the Diocese of Manchester. Perhaps you have already been informed about the conclusions of the Attorney General of the State of New Hampshire regarding a compliance audit conducted of the diocese to determine whether Bishop McCormack and the administration of the diocese have fulfilled the requirements of the

agreement between the diocese and the state. All the same, I wish to encourage you to investigate the matter, and to take personal responsibility for holding Bishop McCormack accountable, not only to the state but, more importantly, to Christ's faithful in the Diocese of Manchester.

In the agreement of December 2002, the Diocese acknowledged that under the state's child endangerment statute "the state has evidence likely to sustain a conviction." In order to avoid criminal prosecution, the Bishop of Manchester agreed that the Diocese would fulfill a number of conditions that would "facilitate the protection of children," and "ensure a system of accountability, oversight, transparency, and training." (For the full text of the agreement between the state and diocese see: www.catholicchurchnh.org/docs/doc95.pdf) The agreement also required the public release of more than nine thousand pages of legal documents and diocesan personnel records that convincingly established a pattern of cover up, mendacity, and callousness on the part of diocesan officials, including especially Auxiliary Bishop Francis J. Christian (to examine the documentary record from the diocese see www.bishop-accountability.org/NH-Manchester/).

The conditions of the above agreement also required the Diocese of Manchester "to submit to an annual audit to be performed by the Office of the Attorney General regarding compliance by the Diocese of Manchester with the terms of this Agreement and Diocesan policies." Although the diocese expended considerable resources in trying to prevent execution of this aspect of the agreement, and held up the audit in the courts for nearly three years, the audit went forward in 2005, and the report of the auditors was released by the Attorney General last week. (For the full text of the audit report see:

http://doj.nh.gov/publications/nreleases/033006diocese_report.html). In releasing the report, the Attorney General wrote that "although three years have passed since the Agreement was signed, the findings of KPMG [the auditing firm] establish that there are a number of deficiencies in the Diocese's compliance program," and that those deficiencies "undermine some of the core principles of the Agreement."

In commenting on the audit at a public news conference, the Attorney General offered her opinion that "the fundamental problem seems to be a failure to take responsibility at the top of the diocese." She added that "it starts at the bishop, but it's not just him alone." (See *Concord Monitor* 30 March, 2006). The Attorney General's observation is telling. First, she acknowledges what virtually every responsible Catholic has understood since the first stories broke about the sex abuse crisis: Bishop John McCormack has consistently failed to protect children from sexual abuse. He was personally involved in the cover up of abuse in the Boston Archdiocese; in New Hampshire, he assigned priests he knew were sexually deviant and dangerous to children; and since the end of 2002, he has failed to take the necessary administrative steps to correct the problems that led to decades of abuse, and more than \$21 million in settlements in this diocese alone.

Second, the Attorney General points to others in the diocesan administration who also bear responsibility for the failure to meet legal obligations, and the ongoing embarrassment of incompetence in the Manchester chancery. Of particular note is the terrible record of Rev. Edward J. Arsenault, Delegate for Ministerial Conduct, and his Associate Delegate, and present Chancellor of the Diocese, Diane Murphy Quinlan. In his public remarks on the audit report, Rev. Arsenault seemed entirely oblivious to the damning conclusions drawn by the Attorney General. Instead, he blamed the professional auditors for what he characterized as "factual inaccuracies and misleading statements." But, as one commentator wrote, "evasiveness and debate points will not address the real question of whether the church is living up to the

settlement and to its obligation to the public to make children safer.”

Moreover, reporters who reviewed the audit came to a conclusion quite different than the self-serving interpretation of Rev. Arsenault. One article in the *Foster's Daily Democrat* ran with the headline: “Audit says Catholic Church in N.H. failed to ensure criminal background checks.” Another headline in the *Concord Monitor* summarized the matter this way: “Diocese still falls short, audit says.” The *Manchester Union Leader* agreed, explaining to readers that “The Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester still has not fully implemented child protections policies it promised to enact under the agreement it struck with the state in 2002 to avoid criminal prosecution for child endangerment.” We do not have to look far to find the person principally responsible for this failure. “I am the enforcer of the policy,” boasted Rev. Arsenault at his news conference.

As the recent audit makes clear, Bishop McCormack, Bishop Christian, Fr. Arsenault, Ms. Quinlan and the others responsible for child protection in the diocese are either deliberately refusing their moral responsibility to protect children, or they remain stubbornly unwilling to comply with a legal agreement to which they are bound by the force of law and honor, or they all suffer from a measure of incompetence that makes them incapable of carrying out their duties and meeting their obligations to the people of the diocese and the state. It is evident, in any case, that the children of New Hampshire are not safe, and that the present occupants of the chancery care little about that fact. It is abundantly clear to the people of New Hampshire, and especially to the Catholic people who continue to suffer the embarrassment of this failed episcopal regime, that Bishop McCormack, for the good of the church, must be removed as Bishop of Manchester.

These points were emphasized in several newspaper editorials published in the last few days. The *Manchester Union Leader* wrote that “the diocese never was as interested in protecting children, as in appearing to protect them.” They concluded that “Bishop John McCormack cannot be trusted to put the interests of children above the interests of the church. For the safety of all children entrusted to the church’s spiritual and physical care, Bishop McCormack must be removed.” The *Lawrence Eagle-Tribune* agreed, and also called for Bishop McCormack’s resignation, writing that “Yesterday’s release of the state’s first audit of the Manchester Catholic Diocese’s sexual-abuse prevention efforts raises once again the question of why the church allows John B. McCormack to continue as bishop. His central role in the clergy sex-abuse scandal taints the moral authority of his position.” The *Concord Monitor* also concluded that “the leadership of the Diocese of Manchester remains in denial about its history of child sex abuse by priests and its responsibility to ensure that more children won’t be scarred for life.” They determined that, “the church has not taken the issue of child abuse or its agreement with the state seriously,” and that “Bishop John McCormack and [Rev.] Arsenault failed the church, children and parishioners before the agreement. They continue to do so. Nothing will change as long as they are in charge.”

Now, Archbishop Sambí, what will you do about this? Your predecessor, His Excellency Archbishop Montalvo, was well informed about the moral inadequacies and administrative incompetence of Bishop John McCormack and his idolizing subordinates. For a period of more than two years I and others corresponded with him in an attempt to have the Holy See hold Bishop McCormack accountable for his failure to protect children. A check of your archives should produce a document sent to the Nunciature in late October, 2003, in which I and other members of the Catholic laity in the Diocese of Manchester appealed to canon law for the just removal of our bishop. It was an appeal Archbishop Montalvo elected to ignore. (For a copy of that document, and the related correspondence, see:

<http://www.nhcatholics.org/download3May2005.htm>). Had Archbishop Montalvo taken our appeal seriously, had the Holy See acted by removing Bishop McCormack when we warned three years ago about the growing crisis in our diocese, perhaps the most recent chapter of this scandal could have been avoided.

I urge you, Archbishop, to act without further delay, and to take personal responsibility for bringing these matters to the immediate attention of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI. I do so with the words of St. Peter Damian in mind. Outraged at the scourge of clerical pederasty infecting the church in the eleventh century, he wrote to Pope Leo IX: “Listen, you do-nothing superiors of clerics and priests. Listen, and even though you feel sure of yourselves, tremble at the thought that you are partners in the guilt of others; those, I mean, who wink at the sins of their subjects that need correction and who by ill-considered silence allow them license to sin. Listen, I say, and be shrewd enough to understand that all of you alike, are deserving of death, that is, not only those who do such things, but also they who approve those that practice them.” (*Peter Damian: Letters 31-60*, trans. Owen J. Blum, O.F.M. [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1990], 15).

Moreover, Archbishop, I humbly request an opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to review the record of Bishop McCormack, and to discuss the continuing concerns shared by many lay people, and priests, in the Diocese of Manchester about the need for new episcopal leadership. Please contact me to arrange a date and time when we can meet.

When a Bishop Fails

[The following April 2, 2006 *Manchester Union Leader* editorial is reprinted in full with one-time permission.]

A bishop's failure: Audit shows McCormack is unfit

WHEN SUPPOSED men of God have to be compelled by the state to protect children, something is terribly wrong.

That is the situation with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester. Last week the state Attorney General's Office released an audit of the diocese's compliance with the 2002 settlement agreement in the priest sex abuse scandal. That agreement required the diocese to take numerous steps to protect the children under its supervision. The audit found that although the diocese has made a great deal of progress, it has failed to comply fully with the settlement's terms.

That is no surprise. The diocese never was as interested in protecting children, as in appearing to protect them. It adopted new procedures because not doing so would have resulted in criminal prosecution. But those procedures were drafted merely to follow the letter of the law. The spirit of the law — the deep-seated desire to shield the innocent from the depraved and the wicked — never found a home in the heart of the diocesan leadership.

One of the many failures cited in the attorney general's report involved a priest who "did not complete the Safe Environment Screening Program requirements and was later accused of prohibited conduct, as defined by the Church's Code of Ministerial Conduct."

In a familiar story, the priest resigned "to seek medical treatment" and was later reinstated by the diocese. He was later found to have accessed pornography, possibly including images depicting children, on a church computer. The audit indicates that the diocese waited months before notifying the attorney general of this conduct, as it was required to do.

Yet again, we find the church relying on "medical treatment" for a problem priest and failing to handle the priest in a way that demonstrates any concern for potential victims.

The audit confirms what we have maintained for nearly four years now, which is that Bishop John McCormack cannot be trusted to put the interests of children above the interests of the church. For the safety of all children entrusted to the church's spiritual and physical care, Bishop McCormack must be removed.

No Small Thing

[In another reminder of just how close Catholics are to collegiality within our Church, the Bridgeport, CT diocese refused to publish an ad in their newspaper for an upcoming lecture by Notre Dame theologian Fr. Richard McBrien. The talk is sponsored by VOTF Bridgeport, CT and Fairfield University. Joe O'Callaghan of VOTF Bridgeport said, "By refusing to announce a lecture by one of America's foremost theologians on a topic of particular interest, our diocesan newspaper is engaging in an act of censorship that Catholics everywhere will surely find unacceptable." VOTF Bridgeport placed the following text on their web site at www.votfbpt.org. What do *you* think? Write to pthorp.ed@votf.org]

Dr. Joseph McAleer, spokesman for Bishop William E. Lori and editor of *Fairfield County Catholic*, the official newspaper of the Diocese of Bridgeport, recently rejected an advertisement for a lecture to be given by Father Richard P. McBrien, Crowley-O'Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

The ad announced that Fr. McBrien will give the keynote address on "The Election of Bishops: The Return to Tradition" at a conference at Fairfield University on Saturday, April 29 sponsored by Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

In a letter dated March 14 and addressed to James Alvord, a member of VOTF, Dr. McAleer explained that as *Fairfield County Catholic* is "the official newspaper of the Diocese of Bridgeport, we will not promote your organization or its sponsored events." Dr. McAleer on March 28 informed John Marshall Lee, vice-chair of VOTF, that as "Father McBrien's talk is the keynote address of your organization's conference" he would not publish the ad even if there were no reference to VOTF.

Fairfield County Catholic's submissions policy states that “the opinions and advertisements published herein do not necessarily agree with the editorial position of this newspaper.” *Fairfield County Catholic* also declares that it “brings information, education, and events that reflect the life and activities of the People of God” to 90,000 homes in Fairfield County.

Given those statements, VOTF asks why Dr. McAleer would deny the people of the Diocese of Bridgeport the opportunity to learn of a lecture by Father McBrien on a topic of such importance to them. Dr. McAleer’s position seems inconsistent with the spirit of *aggiornamento* at the heart of Vatican II and contradicts the stated purpose of *Fairfield County Catholic*.

One of America’s best-known theologians, Father McBrien, a priest of the archdiocese of Hartford, and past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, was awarded the Society’s John Courtney Murray Award for “distinguished achievement in theology” in 1976. He is also a former chairman of the Department of Theology at Notre Dame. Prior to coming to Notre Dame he was Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College. He is a frequent on-air network commentator on Catholic events and has written a weekly column for the Catholic press since 1966.

Among Fr. McBrien’s many contributions to Catholic theology are his *Catholicism*, a two-volume presentation of the whole panorama of Catholic belief and practice, used in many theology courses in Catholic universities throughout the United States. He also authored *Lives of the Popes* and was the general editor of the *Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*.

A sociological study completed in 2004 revealed that the members of Voice of the Faithful are highly committed to the Catholic Church. Most are “cradle Catholics” who regularly attend mass and actively participate in the life of the Church as members of parish councils and liturgy committees, lectors, eucharistic ministers, and religious educators. Well-educated, with many holding advanced degrees, they are exceptionally knowledgeable about the history and teachings of the Catholic Church.

The all-day conference entitled “Elect our Bishops? Why Not?” will be held in The Oak Room in the Barone Campus Center at Fairfield University. Fr. McBrien will speak at 10:45 a.m. Registration begins at 10 a.m. and the closing mass is scheduled at 4 p.m. Registration is \$20 until April 15; thereafter and at the door, \$25. Students will be admitted free. For program details and registration forms see www.votfbpt.org. Checks made out to “VOTF April 29th Conference” may be mailed to VOTF, PMB#171, 1127 High Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06905-1203

