

2015 Assembly Workshop Report: Towards Healing the People of God

Facilitators: Bill Casey, email b13909@comcast.net, and Fr. Jim Connell, email connellj@archmil.org

Facilitators Bill Casey and Fr. Jim Connell provided an introductory experience for the Healing Circle model of Restorative Justice.

Fr. Jim reported: “These well attended workshops introduced the Restorative Justice Healing Circle as a way to assist people who suffer in any way because of the Catholic clergy sexual abuse crisis and scandal. (It helps them) journey farther down their individual path toward healing.

“Moreover, the workshop participants engaged in a sample Healing Circle so as to feel the experience, not simply to have heard about it. Indeed, the participants left the workshop with some new-found hope that healing can be a reality.”

Bill Casey added his observations: “I counted 60 participants in the three circles (i.e., workshop sessions). I expected people to share their thoughts in reaction to the question we posed, ‘What is the pain/harm that you believe needs healing regarding the clergy sexual abuse experience?’

“However, I was pleasantly surprised how deeply man shared despite being asked to respond in only a couple of sentences. That part took up most of the hour available, and it demonstrated how powerful the circle can be—far more than what Jim and I could describe to them.”