

## We are starting to see accountability for clergy abuse, even among the hierarchy

Recent events around clergy sexual abuse suggest the proverbial tide may be turning. The Church's reaction has been to close institutional ranks, but now we are seeing action against perpetrators and abettors, both by the Church and civil authorities.

A marked example of how far the abuse scandal has progressed toward accountability is the resignation of retired Cardinal Theodore McCarrick after the Vatican determined allegations of sexual abuse were found "credible and substantiated." The credible abuse occurred 50 years ago when he was a priest in the New York Archdiocese. Allegations of McCarrick's abuse of other vulnerable adults also have resurfaced. He is the first cardinal in the history of the Church to resign because of sexual abuse.

As fallout from McCarrick's resignation continues, at least one bishop has said what Voice of the Faithful has been saying

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## 2018 Conference attendees get first look at VOTF 2nd diocesan financial transparency report

Voice of the Faithful's Finance Working Group followed-up its 2017 study of online diocesan financial transparency in all 177 U.S. dioceses by repeating it this summer. The 2018 report will debut at **Voice of the Faithful's 2018 Conference: Progress & Promise**. We are looking forward to seeing how dioceses have improved online transparency compared with last year.

VOTF's 2018 Conference takes place Oct. 6, 2018, in Providence, Rhode Island. If you have not registered, do so now. Early-bird pricing of \$85 per registrant will soon end and regular pricing of \$125 per registrant will begin. **Register and make hotel reservations at [votf.org](http://votf.org).**

Join us for thought-provoking discussion. Guest speakers will include **Marie Collins**, a clergy abuse survivor well known internationally for her support of survivors and member of the initial Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors; Vatican II expert **Massimo Faggioli**, Villanova University theology professor, who brings a unique European/American point of view to Vatican II's legacy and Pope Francis' papacy; and Fr. William Clark, associate professor of religious studies at The College of the Holy Cross, whose interests lie in issues affecting local church communities and lay leadership.



*Downtown Providence, Rhode Island, where VOTF is holding its 2018 Conference: Progress & Promise on Oct. 6. Register at [votf.org](http://votf.org).*

# Accountability

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for the past 16 years: give the laity a voice in the governance and guidance of our Church.

This is the way Bishop Edward Scharfenberger of Albany, N.Y., put it in *America* magazine after Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl had suggested a “high-level panel” of the USCCB was needed to “evaluate allegations or rumors of sexual misconduct by one of its member bishops”:

“‘To have credibility, a panel would have to be separated from any source of power whose trustworthiness might potentially be compromised,’ he said ... ‘Our laypeople are not only willing to take on this much-needed role, but they are eager to help us make lasting reforms that will restore a level of trust that has been shattered yet again.’”

Pope Francis’ attitude also has changed appreciably, resulting from widespread abuse in Chile. Over just a few weeks he shifted from calling Chilean abuse survivors’ allegations “calumny” to removing three bishops, after he met with Chilean abuse victims and after Vatican investigator Archbishop Charles Scicluna submitted his report.

Chilean police and prosecutors raided Catholic Church offices in the Osorno Diocese of Bishop Juan Barros, and prosecutors promise a soon-to-be “historic trial.” Scicluna and his colleague, Father Jordi Farnos, made a second trip to Chile to help ensure “adequate responses to each case of sexual abuse of minors.” Two Chilean cardinals and an archbishop have been accused of covering up, and an investigation of the entire Chilean Church is being considered.

Pope Francis also has accepted the resignation of Honduran auxiliary bishop Juan José Pineda, after a Vatican investi-

## Pennsylvania clergy abuse grand jury report is potentially most explosive ever

*Report may have been released by the time you read this.*

An 800-plus-page grand jury report into clergy sexual abuse in six Catholic dioceses in Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Allentown, and Scranton) that implicates 300 “predator priests” may be the most explosive ever issued.

The report was completed in June, but the Pennsylvania Supreme Court blocked its release because about two dozen clergy and others named in the report claimed they had been denied due process. The six bishops involved said they did not block the report. Several victims and news outlets then unsuccessfully sued to get the report released.

As of this writing, a redacted, interim report is set to be released by early August.



*Sts. Peter & Paul Basilica, Philadelphia (Wikimedia Commons)*

gation of financial mismanagement and sexual misconduct against seminarians. Pineda has long been suspected of these allegations. He works for cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, head of the Pope’s council of cardinal advisors.

Of the C9, cardinals Maradiaga, Francisco Javier Errázuriz Ossa, and George Pell, who is standing trial on multiple counts of historic sexual abuse while on leave from his position as Vatican treasurer, are over 75-years-old, and Pope Francis could accept their resignations.

In Rome, a Vatican tribunal has sentenced former Vatican diplomat Alberto Capella to five years in prison for possession and distribution of child pornography, and he may be removed from the priesthood. In Australia, Archbishop Philip Wilson was convicted of covering

up child sexual abuse, and Pope Francis has accepted his resignation. In Cheyenne, Wyoming, allegations of sexual abuse of minors against Bishop Joseph Hart have been found “credible and requiring disciplinary action.”

Guam’s Archbishop Anthony Apuron is appealing his Vatican conviction earlier this spring for “certain accusations” of sexual abuse of minors. He has been removed from office. The Church and lawyers there are attempting to settle more than 170 civil suits brought by abuse survivors (184 people in Guam have said they were abused by clergy or others associated with the Church).

States’ attorneys general have long tried to pry open the scandal, with limited results, but momentum is building, most

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# Accountability

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visibly in Pennsylvania. A grand jury report that probably will have been released by the time you read this is expected to reveal widespread abuse. The investigation covered six dioceses: Greensburg, Allentown, Scranton, Erie, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh.

Legislators there are hoping the report will at last prompt changes in the state's statute of limitations for sexual assault, which devastating grand jury reports in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese and Philadelphia Archdiocese were not able to achieve, although the 2011 report in Philadelphia resulted in the convictions of two priests.

National governments also have investigated institutional abuse of minors. The Church has figured highly in such investigations, which, for example, have taken place in Ireland, Scotland, Australia, The Netherlands, and United Kingdom. In Australia, the inquiry has led to suggested changes in the law that include requiring priests to break the seal of confession in cases of clergy sexual abuse of a minor.

Predicting where all this will lead is risky, but Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of Australia's bishop conference, recently told *Cruxnow.com* that the atmosphere in the Vatican is totally different today than in 2002. Now, "there is a determination to work with all the local churches in really trying to ... understand the phenomenon and the scale and the complexity, and ... not just wring hands or have another discussion, but to actually take action ... There is absolutely no room for complacency, but there is room for encouragement."

*For other examples of how the changing tide in the clergy abuse scandal read the "Focus" columns in VOTF's In the Vineyard twice-monthly e-newsletter, which are available on our website at votf.org.*

# Revising the Dallas Charter

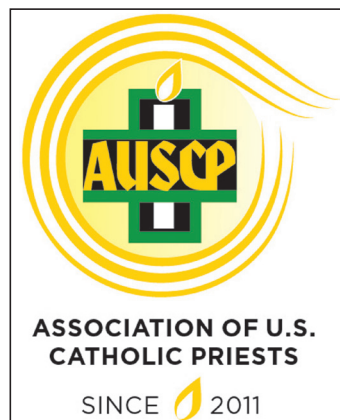
By Patricia T. Gomez

U.S. bishops attending the USCCB 2018 Annual Conference this past June voted overwhelmingly to accept revisions to their Charter for the Protection Children & Young People, called the Dallas Charter. Although these revisions are welcome, they are the first to be made to the articles of charter in seven years.

The 2002 charter was created to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors

by Catholic clergy. The charter was a reaction by bishops to the public exposure of abuses committed by deacons, priests, and bishops, which were exposed by investigative reporting in U.S. national news media, in particular *The Boston Globe*. Revelations in an escalating abuse crisis perpetrated by Catholic clergy across the globe persist today, sixteen years after abuse revelations were first

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## AUSCP proposes goals on clericalism, women's status at assembly

During its 2018 Assembly in June, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests committed itself to white papers on clericalism and women's status in the Church. Voice of the Faithful was an exhibitor for the fourth consecutive year at the assembly and applauds the association's moves. VOTF delivered a colloquia on clericalism at the association's 2016 assembly and continues to promote the cause of women at all levels of Church responsibility, particularly an ordained women's diaconate. Expressed as goals and delineated through white papers, AUSCP proposed the following (edited from AUSCP's 2018 Assembly program booklet):

### Clericalism

Voices during Vatican II identified clericalism as [a] major problem in the Church. Pope Francis considers it a serious enough problem that he still frequently speaks about it. A well done AUSCP white paper dealing with the problem as it manifests itself in our national presbyterate can be a positive and constructive contribution to efforts to diminish and hopefully banish clericalism within the Church in the United States. A working group will be established to write the document over the coming year for presentation to AUSCP's 2019 Assembly. (Sponsors are Rev. Kevin Clinton of the Archdiocese of Sts. Paul & Minneapolis and Rev. Bob Bonnot of the Diocese of Youngstown.)

### Status of Women in the Church

Using listening dialogue with women and engaging the involvement of philosophers and theologians, both men and women, a white paper would clarify the basis of distinguishing the pastoral ministry that can be afforded the faithful by men and women respectively in the name of Christ Risen. Two reports from two distinct Vatican International Theological Commissions have concluded that there is neither anything in scripture that forbids ordination of women, nor anything in scripture that supports the ordination of women. That has left in limbo the ontological-theological status of women as fully human persons created in the image and likeness of God and baptized into Christ. Without a clarification, the legal and practical distinction between men and women regarding their ability to provide pastoral ministry appears to be discriminatory and is a scandal to many. This distinction needs clarification. (The sponsor is Rev. Bob Bonnot of the Diocese of Youngstown.)

# Revising the Dallas Charter *(Continued from Page 3)*

brought to our attention through national news media.

The USCCB charter's articles continue today to be guidelines for reconciliation, accountability, healing, and the prevention of future acts of such abuse in the U.S. Catholic Church. In 2005, various articles were revised, including article 12, which concerns safe environments for children, and the charter was revised again in 2011.

Recent charter amendments include an amendment of article 13 that now expands background checks to include everyone who has any contact with minors. Background checks in churches, schools, and other organizations do help keep predators away from children. They act as a deterrent because those checks uncover past actions that should ban an adult from working or volunteering with children.

Article 6 on codes of conduct has likewise been broadened to apply to all who have any contact with children, an expansion of the previous clause which

encompassed only those who have regular interactions with minors. A code of conduct is simply a set of rules to be followed and is one important piece of a comprehensive safe environment program. The power of these codes lies in their enforcement when any breach is uncovered.

collection process, the validity of the data, and fraternal correction process.

Despite charter revisions, questions remain. Is waiting seven years between revisions wise? Would it be prudent to continually analyze infractions against the charter to ensure its effectiveness in

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***Importantly, the Preamble to the Charter now contains language calling for support of victims in their recovery from the “crimes of abuse” and a call to “prevent these tragedies from happening again.”***

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Importantly, the charter's preamble now contains language calling for support of victims in their recovery from the “crimes of abuse” and a call to “prevent these tragedies from happening again.” The current 2018 version of the charter, as well as a list of highlighted revisions, can be found on the USCCB website: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>.

addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors to the fullest extent? Is this extended timeframe necessary to appropriately analyze the effects of previous revisions? Or does the lag between revisions contribute to the “sense of complacency” among a growing number of dioceses about child protection measures, as suggested by the rise in boundary violations noted in the 2017 Audit Report?

The charter review process itself relies on data from annual audit reports of compliance with charter articles, which should prompt examination of the data

For its part, Voice of the Faithful continues to promote safe environments in our parishes for the prevention of abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.



## SAVE THE DATE — Wednesday, Sept. 26

On Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018, former VOTF board members Jayne O'Donnell and Bill Casey will conduct an informational session on Voice of the Faithful's Broken™ Vessel Healing Circle initiative. Healing is a core Gospel value and is vital to the spiritual, psychological, and physical recovery from clergy sexual abuse for the entire Body of Christ. With Broken Vessel™ Healing Circles, based on restorative justice practices and Biblical teaching, VOTF offers a path toward that healing. The information session will take place at 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick & St. Anthony Church, 265 Church St., Hartford, Connecticut. The session is free, and free parking is available just across the street.

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Voice of the Faithful® is a worldwide movement of Roman Catholics working to provide a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the faithful can participate actively in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church. We support survivors of clergy sexual abuse, support priests of integrity, and work to help shape structural change in the Church.

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