

10/7/18 – Corpus Christi Parents' Town Hall

*Note: these paraphrases attempt to capture the main points of participants, but are not verbatim.*

- The Body of Christ has experienced extreme trauma.
- I am feeling angry and ashamed after the Pennsylvania revelations. I feel defeated.
- I am so angry... furious. Every time I talk about it, you hear this. It's not how I normally sound. What the people in power are saying is not enough. We need institutional accountability. The church is hiding behind bankruptcy. This is not Christ-like.
- It hurts me. I feel sadness.
- At my age, I have given up hope of a woman president. I have also given up hope of women priests or bishops. I want to move on to what we can really change. I want this parish to be a leader parish. If half of these people marched to the diocesan offices and called television stations, things could change. Let's do something.
- We're dealing with two evils: the abuse and the coverup. The emphasis in the handouts is on the coverup, but we should look at why the priests abuse. The coverup is the secondary effect.
- What can we do? Withholding money from the diocese? We need money in the parish (e.g. for youth ministry). What if we started something like the national women's march? What if we involved ex-Catholics who left 5, 10, 15 years ago?
- My old parish in NY recently had new accusations of old abuse. The priest was moved around to different parishes. I feel utter despair. Efforts are going to flame out in six to nine months. The leadership of the church wins, and nothing changes. Futility of any action.
- People need to understand the adversary we're dealing with. Who are we trying to move on this? For us, it's the Oakland diocese, then the larger church. The women's march dissipated. There's outrage on the Kavanaugh appointment, but we'll see if people will rise to make the changes that many think need to be made. Look around at the ages of the people here, mostly over 55. We are dealing with an institution that has covered up, turned its back on it, and not held people accountable (those who did and those who knew). I'm a prosecutor, and the statute of limitations has run out on almost everything. Where are the people that resulted in \$60+ million in payouts?
- Compliance with 2002 guidelines is nice, but not enough. What can we do to make people believe in the institution? What is the goal? What are we trying to accomplish? How do we move the bishop?
- Bishop Barber is fairly new, and he inherited a lot that came before. Bishop Cordileone did inappropriate things when he was running the Oakland diocese.
- I would promote that we stop giving money from this parish to the diocese. It takes years to change any institution. Are we committed and prepared for that long? I want to focus just on our bishop and diocese, not beyond.
- The challenge is what we do next. This parish is in a good position to do this. Women's ordination and married priests is further out, but we need to do something specific now. This is a very positive thing where we can build on the momentum.
- Have we asked the bishop to come speak to us?
- We have to be insiders before we can do anything. We have to have jobs in the diocesan structure. It's useless until we get an investigative reporter inside. We need lay people on all the boards in the diocese, such as those that assign priests, etc.

- We haven't looked at the history of the church, replete with corruption, wars, etc. We need to look at ourselves in the mirror: how we treat women. It is a matter of what we do as individuals. We can't put the church on a pedestal. Faith is not sufficient. It's about what you do.
- Remember that St. Francis was a lay person (he was eventually ordained a deacon).
- The table needs to be flipped over. We can't increment our way out of this. This needs to be a large coordinated disruptive effort. Little changes are not going to make a difference. Someone needs to light the fuse.
- Can the statute of limitations be changed? Not retroactively.
- I've lived both as a celibate and a married man. It's time to take back the church. I worked in community organizing. I don't believe celibacy is the issue. The issue is how we admit men to the priesthood. We need a radical change. 1. A panel has to be comprised of lay people (especially women) and clergy that will decide admittance to seminary. 2. We need a restructuring at the parish and diocesan levels. Pastoral councils at both levels are currently advisory. They need to be authoritative bodies. Majority on these councils should be women. 3. We need to change the requirements for ordination to the priesthood. We need to reactivate those who were priests and became married, to help (not become pastors, but as supplemental support). Then we should allow any married priests. Then women priests. I reject Paul VI's assertion that priests must be like Jesus "in all ways" (meaning having a penis). We need servant leadership.
- Married priests already exist (married Episcopal/Anglican priests can convert to Catholicism and remain married priests serving Catholic parishes).
- We should be thinking about the solution. We mentioned withholding the contribution of the parish to the diocese. What about what the diocese is doing to serve, such as in hospitals, and what else the money could be doing. We should also be aware of the possible backlash of other Catholics who don't agree.
- The parish should draft a letter to the bishop with focused requests: lay participation in councils, majority lay participation at the upcoming synod.
- Do we have any right to request anything? If this were a corporation, we would have already removed the board of directors and all executives.
- Where is our power? It comes from our baptism.
- I feel a lot of outrage and want massive change. We need to make sure we're doing everything we can do here in our parish first. How do we provide a safe environment? Are there times when altar servers are alone in the sacristy with an adult? We shouldn't lose sight of this. Do we feel that we can take these guidelines to prospective school parents? Enrollment numbers are down. We need to worry about the integrity of our parish.
- What would happen if we had a class action lawsuit against the diocese or the pope? Can any group sue the church as a whole? (Yes, but you have to identify the harm.)
- Leadership is an activity. You become a leader by acting like a leader. And it's time for us to act like leaders.