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## My View from the Pew: A Response to the 21 Points Issued by Pope Francis on 2.21.19

### ***Pope Francis' Points listed here in red with responses:***

1. To prepare a practical handbook indicating the steps to be taken by authorities at key moments when a case emerges.

**Establish Standards for all Processes** – The Vatican needs to take a leadership role in establishing common standards surrounding sexual misconduct also allowing local adaptation:

- Review current Process of each diocese/country and find best practices of accountability, transparency and success in reducing number of incidents
- Create an International Charter for Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults using USCCB Dallas Charter as a template but EXPAND to include Bishops, Cardinals and non-clergy Catholic workers
  - Clearly Define ALL Terms:
    - Define what constitutes sexual misconduct, deviance or abuse
    - Define what is ACTUALLY meant by Zero Tolerance (what is deemed credible abuse, by what standard is abuse or misconduct measured, what level of proof is required, what actually happens if found guilty, etc)
    - Define CREDIBLE – what is credible evidence, credible witness, etc.
    - Define what standards are used – reasonable person standard?
    - Define investigation – Who actually investigates and how are decisions made
  - Clearly Define Consequences for each level of sexual deviance, misconduct, abuse
  - Standardize Reporting Procedures for local, national and intl. hot lines - Independent body needs to respond to hot line calls (log, process, collect data, follow actions taken after reporting) and define how information is relayed to civil authorities and shared with diocesan and national Catholic organizations

2. To equip oneself with listening structures that include trained and expert people who can initially discern the cases of the alleged victims.

- **Establish Listening Protocols**
  - When a vulnerable individual is abused or experiences unwelcome sexual advances, the Church often inflicts a second, deeper wound by stonewalling the accuser which has a ripple effect damaging family and friends and leading to additional harm and loss of souls
  - Protocol for the first 24 – 48 hours after an accusations is raised is critical
  - Avoid defensiveness and focus on healing and empathy for victims
- **Utilization of Independent Entities** for investigation and review of accusations for accountability, oversight and transparency.
  - Vatican/Natl conferences could connect these entities to provide sharing of best practices.
  - *Independent entities should process hot line calls and follow case to conclusion*
- **Clarify Investigation Process** - Often a diocese has staff for prevention (Screening of staff and volunteers) and dealing with abuse victims but no one responsible for investigating accusation and coordinating with local civil authorities. Need clear policies of reporting and investigating.
  - Provide transparency for *who* investigates each accusation allowing Lay review Boards to review non clergy accusations as well

- Clarify who or what entity can investigate whom including Bishops (For instance Principals should not investigate *their* own staff or Pastors should not investigate *their* volunteers)
- Improve Communication to accusers/accused during process and final decisions
- Provide Appeals process at each level of decision making for an impartial review

### 3. Establish the criteria for the direct involvement of the Bishop or the Religious Superior.

- **Bishops Role in LISTENING** -Acknowledging the victims in writing in a timely manner and creating opportunity for Bishops to actively participate in listening to the stories and trying to correct the problems that created the opportunity for abuse to occur is extremely important
  - Selection of Bishops and Superiors should include preference for those that are willing to LISTEN, willing to meet with their flock and willing to wrestle with these issues of abuse
  - Bishops should be open and honest and ready to spiritually surrender to God for help with resolution of these difficult questions.
  - Bishops should never protect clergy and Catholic workers over minors
  - Communication with victim should be pastoral rather than written by lawyers
- **Bishops/Religious Superior need to address all unanswered questions in writing** All questions from those under their care should be taken seriously and addressed. When questions are brushed off, demeaned, or ridiculed the truth cannot be revealed and healing is stifled.
  - All questions raised surrounding Mr. McCarrick should be addressed including who knew about his sexual misconduct and continued to promote or look the other way when people were being abused. USCCB and Vatican should release all files pertinent to this case.
  - Transparency in Addressing Issues raised by Media - When allegations or facts are raised by media, they should be addressed openly and honestly not answered in legalese and deception.

### 4. Implement **shared** procedures for the examination of the charges, the protection of the victims and the right of defense of the accused.

- **Create an international database of credibly accused clergy and paid Catholic workers**

### 5. Inform the civil authorities and the higher ecclesiastical authorities in compliance with civil and canonical norms.

- **Transparency with Civil Authorities** Model Transparency for all dioceses to emulate:
  - Establish clear protocols for who needs to be informed of the accusation (in writing) and when in the process and consequences if not followed
  - Allow an independent review of each country in relation to sexual abuse
  - Allow independent review of finances spent on sexual misconduct in all diocese including insurance, pay outs, outside expenses on investigations, lawyer fees, etc.
  - Encourage each diocese to work with State Attorney Generals (Denver, Colorado as example)

### 6. Make a periodic review of protocols and norms to safeguard a protected environment for minors in all pastoral structures: protocols and norms based on the integrated principles of justice and charity so that the action of the Church in this matter is in conformity with her mission.

- **Regaining Moral Credibility** - Set the standard for transparency and accountability and allow more freedom of each diocese to embrace these concepts and do whatever it takes to regain trust and credibility. LISTEN – CONFESS – BEG FOR FORGIVENESS – REPARATION - REFORM

7. Establish specific protocols for handling accusations against Bishops.

- **Canon Law** – Complete a thorough overview with suggested changes to the pertinent parts of canon law that deal with all aspects of the institutional problems of abuse and role of laity

8. Accompany, protect & treat victims, offering them all the necessary support for a complete recovery.

- **Create “GUARDIAN” Program** - to accompany those that call hot lines and report incidents:

Create a program called Guardians for each diocese to train people to accompany those that file accusations or call diocesan hotlines – the processes are never clear or easy to understand – Doesn't need to be huge number but they should meet nationally to share best practices and challenges. This program can be similar to those that accompany people during annulments and can be adapted from the Safeguarder program already in existence. Clearly define process in each diocese in easy to understand terms

9. Increase awareness of the causes and consequences of sexual abuse through ongoing formation initiatives of Bishops, Religious Superiors, clerics and pastoral workers.

- **In Depth Research** – Broad review of all aspects of this problem of institutional, generational existence, cover up and promotion of leaders that perpetuated the problem. Not only a look back, but a look at the current state of affairs with the increase harm of internet pornography and sexual deviation in the culture and most importantly a look ahead into how we need to train seminarians and run parishes and schools to keep healthy, courageous, chaste leaders creating safe environments for our children, teens, young adults and all vulnerable individuals.
  - Establish a Task Force to delve into why the incidence of abuse of post pubescence boys is over 80% of total abuse cases and how to address this particular anomaly

10. Prepare pathways of pastoral care for communities injured by abuses and penitential and recovery routes for the perpetrators.

11. To consolidate the collaboration with all people of good will and with the operators of mass media in order to recognize and discern real cases from false ones and accusations of slander, avoiding rancour and insinuations, rumours and defamation (cf. Pope Francis' address to the Roman Curia, 21 Dec 2018).

12. To raise the minimum age for marriage to sixteen years.

13. Establish provisions that regulate and facilitate the participation of lay experts in investigations and in the different degrees of judgment of canonical processes concerning sexual and / or power abuse.

- **Expand Lay Involvement** - for solving problems during this crossroad for our Church
  - Recruit professionals, survivors of abuse, etc to seek solutions to this difficult problem
  - Create national lay review commissions to tackle deeper research and solutions

14. The right to defense: the principle of natural and canon law of presumption of innocence must also be safeguarded until the guilt of the accused is proven. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent the lists of the accused being published, even by the dioceses, before the preliminary investigation and the definitive condemnation.

- **Lists of credibly accused clergy need to include standard information** List should clearly define how lists were compiled, what standards were used to determine how names were added, and details on accusations including how many, when, where and resolution of each.
- **Non Clergy paid Catholic workers with credible accusations need to also be identified**
- **Lists need to be cross referenced globally** International databases need to be created.

15. Observe the traditional principle of proportionality of punishment with respect to the crime committed. To decide that priests & bishops guilty of sexual abuse of minors leave the public ministry.

- **Clear definition of levels of sexual misconduct and corresponding consequences** - If clergy or non-clergy Catholic workers are found guilty, there needs to be clear expectations of consequences for each level of sexual misconduct.

16. Introduce rules concerning seminarians and candidates for the priesthood or religious life. Be sure that there are programs of initial and ongoing formation to help them develop their human, spiritual and psychosexual maturity, as well as their interpersonal relationships and their behavior.

- **In Depth review of seminaries and formation of clergy** and enforce the standards set on who the Church ordains, psychological testing, ongoing continuing education and fidelity to Church teaching, maybe utilizing oath of fidelity similar to what Catholic educators sign.

17. Be sure to have psychological evaluations by qualified and accredited experts for candidates for the priesthood and consecrated life.

- **Promote the continued health, chastity, continence and celibacy of our Clergy**-Examine ways to encourage this with continued education, uses of technology to monitor electronics and vulnerable spaces, find ways for less business tasks and more focus on ministry
  - Offer an annual opportunity for all clergy and nuns to publicly recommit their vows
  - Offer exit strategies to leave their ministry and seek healing if they are unable or unwilling to embrace chastity
  - Offer opportunities for community – to live together, eat meals, pray and socialize
  - Offer success strategies for dealing with sexual challenges on internet or other media with accountability partners, training in pornography and other sexual addictions – create parameters for accountability on social media
  - Encourage use of technology and cameras on church property, seminaries, schools
  - Encourage the laity or lay organizations (Serras) to pray and support priests

18. Establish norms governing the transfer of a seminarian or religious aspirant from one seminary to another; as well as a priest or religious from one diocese or congregation to another.

- Parishioners have the right to know why priests have been transferred to their parish if ANY safety issues to the priests themselves or minors are involved

19. Formulate mandatory codes of conduct for all clerics, religious, service personnel and volunteers to outline appropriate boundaries in personal relationships. Be specific about the necessary requirements for staff and volunteers and check their criminal record.

- Codes of Conduct should be easy to read and clear – if people in leadership are involved in sexual misconduct, they need to be released from their ministerial duties and offered healing
- Code of conduct in terms of social media needs to be established
- ALL listed above should be checked for criminal records and be treated equally in terms of releasing them of their ministerial duties if some criminal record discovered.

20. Explain all information and data on the dangers of abuse and its effects, how to recognize signs of abuse and how to report suspected sexual abuse. All this must take place in collaboration with parents, teachers, professionals and civil authorities.

- Programs need to include information on sexual misconduct on internet as well

21. Where it has not yet been in place, establish a group easily accessible for victims who want to report any crimes. Such an organization should have a certain autonomy with respect to the local ecclesiastical authority and include expert persons (clerics and laity) who know how to express the Church's attention to those who have been offended by improper attitudes on the part of clerics.

- **Create National/International hot lines to report abuse** Sharing information and partnering with local civil authorities