

VIDEO OF REGIONAL MEETINGS WITH
BISHOP NICHOLAS DIMARZIO AND THE
LAY FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE IN
BROOKLYN AND QUEENS

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Regional Meeting on the Sex Abuse Crisis
Questions & Answers

Main points Bishop DiMarzio made during his presentation:

- 1) The negative headlines are not entirely accurately portraying the current state of affairs regarding the sex abuse crisis that happened in the Church.
- 2) In 2002, US Bishops established the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young Adults. If there's one incident of sex abuse, priest can no longer be in ministry.
- 3) The Diocese of Brooklyn has settled over 400 sex abuse cases, involving about 100 priests (5% of total Diocese of Brooklyn priests).
- 4) 95% of the priests never did anything wrong.
- 5) The money used to make settlements to victims comes from mortgaging or sale of properties owned by the diocese. The funds do not come from the Annual Appeal, Capital Campaign, or any parish funds.

Questions and Answers.

Answers by Bishop DiMarzio, unless otherwise indicated

- 1) Q: Is there, or was there, a wall of silence within the Diocese?

A: Not all information was known to the Diocese -- we only knew 14% of the cases we know now. The history shows some cases were not handled properly. Better controls and standards of handling have come into effect. We established an Independent Reporting line: (888) 634-4499 in 2004, with all calls going directly to law enforcement.

- 2) Q: In the 1980s, when boys came to me about someone who was grooming them, the boys were told, that "they had to understand", so they remained victims a second time. I tried to make this known to the proper authorities at that time. It was very difficult to say the least. I had priests who were deliberately covering it up, but there were other priests who came to me and gave me different bits of information, so I realized I was only dealing with the very tip of an iceberg. There are priests who said to me, sister, do whatever you can. They knew, but for whatever reason, the clerical culture, did not allow them to speak out. What are you going to do about that?

A: I think the clerical culture has changed. With the prevention program and the background checks, the culture is completely changed. That we

have only 2 cases since 2002 tells us something: that's it a safer environment, that people really are aware of this and that things are reported.

We must admit the mistakes of the past. We did not deal with it properly. The Reporting Line was put in 2 months after I got here, and I've been meeting with victims right along.

3) Q: I don't understand the difference between Victims and Survivors?

A: Jasmine Salazar/Vice Chancellor-Victim Assistance Coordinator:
Different terms that are used-victim, survivor, and thriver:

- Victim - at the point where victimized; fully experiencing impacts of victimization.
- Survivor - has begun to move through; in process of healing and still experiencing impact of the victimization; has tools to move forward.
- Thriver - the point to where you want to help lead a victim towards; someone that's experienced victimization, developed coping skills; able to experience a full life, despite victimization, never forgotten, but can experience a full life. Victims move throughout process. Sometimes they step back, sometimes they move forward.

4) Q: 95% of clergy have not participated in such diabolical things, how difficult it must be for them. Does the Diocese have any plans in place to take good care of their emotional and psychological needs to strengthen them through this very difficult time?

A: You are the best inspiration to the priests to remain faithful. People of the parish are the ones that the priests work for, you are the best support system, show that you still love them, that you still trust them, and that you trust your children with them.

5) Q: Could you share what's being done in our Diocese to combat the virus of clericalism?

A: Clericalism has 2 sides: that the clergy can do no wrong, and that's where the worst part of it is, but there's another side, that the clergy can do

no right. I think it's clear in our Diocese that the priests are serving the people. I think we've done a lot to avoid the perils of clericalism where priests think they're better than the people. I don't think that exists in our Diocese.

6) Q: What happens to priests found guilty, aside from being left from their ministries?

A: If something is proven to be an act of sexual abuse, we cannot let them remain in active ministry. For some, it is a life of prayer and penance. The priesthood is not taken away, but they can't exercise it, show themselves as priests. Others who were major, serial abusers we start laicization to take the priesthood away from them.

7) Q: Why aren't the live cases reported to the police first?

A: Jasmine Salazar: All cases go to the (Brooklyn or Queens) DA's office. The later cases do not go to the NYPD because they deal with cases that fall within the statute of limitations. The DA's office receives all the reports, every single report, and if they see that there's something that could go to the NYPD to be further investigated, then they will refer it that way.

8) Q: To me the bishops and the male powers that be have passed priests along. If you want to heal as a church, we must address why and how this happened how people were passed parish to parish.

A: Yes, we must address that. I didn't say it didn't happen; survivors must be recognized, we must investigate how many priests were passed around. There is no question it was not handled properly; however, you cannot take the knowledge and awareness of 2018 go back to 1970 or 1980 and say you should've known. Many (priests) were sent to rehabilitation -- that was the first instinct.

Many places dealt with it poorly, if the priests were pedophiles, they should've been dismissed from the priesthood. At that time, the number of abusers was under 50. Now we know it's 106, after we have all the cases in.

But we only knew a portion of the problem. Now, we know more because it's been advertised, and people have come in to report incidents.

9) Q: The movement of priests is part of the problem; did they want to cover up or help the priest?

A: They (Priests) were not moved until they had rehabilitation, sometimes it worked, sometimes it did not. We need to go back to files to see. We will tell you, it won't be pretty, but they did not know what they were dealing with. Period.

10) Q: When you compensated victims/survivors for trauma, those priests volunteers/employees, were they ever prosecuted or put in sex offender registry. And that would, in effect, cancel out moving these people from parish to parish?

A: Most of the cases are beyond the statute of limitations, that's up to the state. Some didn't qualify (for sex offender registry) and some could, that could be next step and better than changing the statute of limitations.

None of them are in ministry now. Nobody who abuses, Zero tolerance. One act of abuse, they're not in ministry anymore. That stopped in 2002.

11) Q: Are seminarians required to take psychological testing before they enter the seminary?

A: Yes, that's been in place for many years, it's a little clearer now what issues need to be looked at very carefully, the issue of narcissism, any prior abuse that they themselves suffered, any kind of isolationism, those kinds of things you look for and then there's a whole battery of psychological test that takes two days before they're accepted into the seminary, so I think we have a much better screening process than we've ever had.

12) Q: I appreciate this gathering, the candor, honesty. There almost seems to be a connection between the abusers and a certain sexual orientation?

A: Of the things we screen (seminarians) for, I did not say sexual orientation because that's not the issue. We're not blaming homosexuals for the problem, it's the Church's problem. It's our problem for how we supervise people.

- 13) Q: The Child Lures Prevention is fabulous. Is there any consideration for opening it to the rest of congregation? Is there any possibility?

A: Maryellen Quinn, Safe Environment Coordinator: We can certainly explore that. We teach the children in the schools and in the Faith Formation. And anyone can come to a Virtus session, it is open to the public.

- 14) Q: In speaking to young people -- and I'm talking 8th graders and up - - what would you recommend there, speak bluntly to them, use caution?

A: The prevention program is about teaching the young people to understand what abuse is, the signs that people sometimes use to groom them, all of this is what we're teaching the young people so that they're more aware.

Maryellen Quinn, Safe Environment Coordinator: Our children are trained from the time they start Religious Ed or school, kindergarten in Catholic schools, and they're given the program of Child Lures.

It starts with baby steps, "what is your bathing suit zone", "no one should touch you in your bathing suit zone". It goes on in 3rd/4th grade to talk about "don't go with strangers", and then as it goes up, the last lessons in 8th grade talk about relationships, "what are good relationships/bad relationships".

- 15) Q: It takes people along time to come forward and my fear is that there are going to be more cases against the Diocese, there are talks of Parishes having their insurance raised, is that going to be part of the payment to survivors and why are Parishioners, if it is, asked to foot the bill?

A: Insurance companies are the first level of defense when we have a suit. They insure us on abuse issues. Above certain level, there's another insurance company and a third on top of that.

The Diocese may go bankrupt. 14 Dioceses (nationally) have already done so. We don't know where the attorney general is going with subpoena.

Parishes are also subject to be sued because abuse took place in the parishes.

- 16) Q: In terms of financial settlements, is there information about how the church is moving forward to resolve things?

A: I think one of the most publicized ones was the recent \$27.5 million settlement. This was something that happened in real time, within the statute of limitations. The Diocese directly did not pay any of that money, because it came out of the insurance money.

- 17) Q: Would commit to releasing the names of the abusive priests and their acts and to put the Bishops' residences on the market, so the money could be used to help defray the costs?

A: We have not released all the names and we will when the program finishes. One of the reasons is that unfortunately, when you release names, people can say I was abused by that person (possible false claims).

We will release the names (of the abusers); it's something I think that people want, I'm not sure what people's motivation is, but we will do that.

Secondly, we very well might have to sell the Bishop's residence in order to pay for the program. At this time, we still have not exhausted all our possibilities of paying for it, but that has already been looked at and there's other things we're looking at.

- 18) Q: You mentioned that the clergy must submit to background checks?

A: Maryellen Quinn/Safe Environment Office Coordinator: We run background searches post-2015, they're run quarterly, prior to that it was every 3 years for an employee and 5 years for volunteer and the clergy go into the 5-year plan.

Since 2015, every background search that we run since then, re-runs quarterly.

Bishop DiMarzio: Nobody in the state does that! Public schools don't do that, for example.

19) Q: What is the Church going to do to combat this anti-Catholic sentiment? It's become more violent, more vehement. What do you need us to do?

A: I am glad you said us because YOU are the church, we are the leadership, but you are the church, that's why we are educating you about this. Politicians in our state must understand you are not happy with what's happening, it means you must vote, talk to your politicians, defend your faith.

Closing Facts:

SINCE 1950, THERE WERE ABOUT 450 CASES OF SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTED IN THE DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN.

SINCE 1950, 106 PRIESTS (5% OF ALL DIOCESAN PRIESTS) HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ABUSE.

IN CASES REPORTED PRIOR TO 2002, THE DIOCESE KNEW ABOUT 14% OF THOSE CASES ONLY.

38% OF CASES CAME IN FROM 2002 TO PRE-IRCP.

48% OF CASES HAVE COME IN SINCE IRCP BEGAN IN JUNE 2017.

IN 2002, THE "CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE" WAS ESTABLISHED.

THE CHARTER ESTABLISHES PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE CHARTER PRIORITIZES OUTREACH AND HEALING FOR VICTIMS.

SINCE 2002, THE DIOCESE HAS TRAINED 82,000 ADULTS IN OVER 3,200 "VIRTUS" SESSIONS.

SINCE 2002, DIOCESE HAS INSTRUCTED 60,000 CHILDREN IN "CHILD LURES PREVENTION" EVERY YEAR.

IN 2017, THE "INDEPENDENT RECONCILIATION AND COMPENSATION PROGRAM" (IRCP) WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE RESTITUTION TO THOSE ABUSED BY A PRIEST OR DEACON.

AT THE END OF IRCP, THE NAMES OF THE CREDIBLY ACCUSED PRIESTS WILL BE RELEASED ALONG WITH THE TOTAL COST OF THE IRCP. A FULL REPORT WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED IN THE DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN.

What can you do?

- 1) Defend your faith. Call and write your elected officials and inform them of what the Diocese of Brooklyn has done and continues to do.
- 2) Encourage parents to allow their children to attend the Child Lures Program.
- 3) Get VIRTUS trained – be more aware.
- 4) Stay current on the issue.
- 5) Support your clergy.

Important Resources:

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

<https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/protecting-children/office-of-safe-environment/>

John Jay College of Criminal Justice Studies

<https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/john-jay-college-reports/>

Child Lures Program

<https://childluresprevention.com/>

Virtus Program

<https://virtusonline.org/virtus/>