NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Sex abuse and the legacy of lay passivity

Jamie Manson | Mar. 14, 2011

Bernie McDaid, a sex abuse victim who met with Pope Benedict XVI in 2008, carries a candle during a demonstration with other victims and supporters near Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome Oct. 31, 2010. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

ANALYSIS

This past Ash Wednesday, while most Catholics were being told to turn away from sin, the faithful in Philadelphia were informed that the hierarchy had, once again, failed to do so themselves.

After reading the details of this latest fallout of the church?s sex abuse epidemic, I am starting to wonder if there is anything left to say. For nine years we have heard unceasing, grim revelations about predatory priests and the bishops who protect them. Everyone knows it?s evil, it?s wrong, it?s the greatest stain on the sullied reputation of the Catholic Church.

Even with so much already said, there is still one question that troubles me. Why are we, the Catholic laity, still letting the hierarchy get away with it?

Yes, some great reform groups like Voice of the Faithful and Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests have been created in response to this crisis. They have done noble work in their advocacy on behalf of victims and in arguing for institutional change.

But why isn?t *everyone* speaking out? Why isn?t every church-going Catholic demanding repentance and genuine reform from church authorities?

Perhaps what disturbs me most is the impact that our failing to speak out might be having on young Catholics.

The sexual abuse crisis is not an issue like women?s ordination, married clergy, or the inclusion of gay and lesbian Catholics. Those concerns are critically important issues of justice.

But the sex abuse crisis is much deeper and darker. It?s about the rape, sodomy, and psychological abuse of children and adolescents by priests. It?s about church authorities going to great lengths to cover-up and to

protect predators. The hierarchy cannot use the Bible, Canon Law, or tradition to defend themselves against these crimes.

Read Jamie Manson's full piece here: **Sex abuse and the legacy of lay passivity** [1]

Source URL (retrieved on *05/02/2016 - 07:32*): http://ncronline.org/news/sex-abuse-and-legacy-lay-passivity

Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/node/23416/