

“Sex Abuse Crisis: Fact, Fiction, Future” Conversation Guide



This conversation guide consists of both questions for discussion and a list of resources referred to in the lecture. Facilitators may wish to make use of these other resources as a part of their presentation and discussion of the materials. We recommend providing space for reflection on the Baptismal Rite as a part of this guide. Do also read the notice at the beginning of the Q&A Session section of the guide. In utilizing this guide, we recommend facilitators choose those questions most helpful to the purpose of their group.

View this lecture here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MjXfO3v99s>

Questions for Conversation Part I: Fr. McGlone’s Lecture (ends 42:45)

- Fr. McGlone begins with the words from the anointing after baptism, a part of the baptismal rite. Spend some time in quiet reflection with these words:

The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
has freed you from sin,
given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,
and welcomed you into his holy people.
He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation.
As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King,
so may you live always as a member of his body,
sharing everlasting life.
All: Amen.

Firstly, think about your own understanding of your baptismal calling. In what ways have you flourished in that calling? In what ways have you felt frustrated in that calling or neglected it?

Secondly, in what ways has the Church aided your growth in this baptismal calling? In what ways has it failed to honor that calling?

- Fr. McGlone uses the image of the head being too large for the body in order to express an imbalance in the body of Christ that led to this abuse crisis. When you think of the body of Christ, what persons, groups, roles come to mind? Do you think we pay enough attention to those who have been harmed and marginalized within the body of Christ?
- Fr. McGlone speaks of the Church as operating on a “grooming model.” What does a “grooming model” of Church look like?
- Are you familiar with the statistics Fr. McGlone quotes about the percentage of abusive priests and the number of victims of sexual abuse by a priest? What is your reaction to these statistics?
- Are you familiar with the Dallas Charter and the John Jay Report? This is a good moment to discuss those two documents with your group facilitator and clarify important measures for protecting children and young people (including the importance of VIRTUS training). While he affirms its significance, what is the major flaw in the Dallas Charter raised by Fr. McGlone?
- Fr. McGlone argues that, “The Church needs a reformation from within because the reformation from without was insufficient.” What important reforms are called for in this talk, and what other reforms might you advocate for in order for the Church to fully live out the teaching of the Gospels and protect the most vulnerable?
- Have you thought of your baptismal calling as including a prophetic and priestly role? How might you find inspiration in this role from the holy men and women mentioned by Fr. McGlone – Peter, Paul, Clare, Teresa of Avila, Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, Catherine of Siena, and many more – whose love for the Church included a prophetic response to the evils present in Church and society?

Questions for Conversation Part II: Q&A Session (42:50-1:56)

It is important to note that the questions asked in the second half of the video reflect the varying perspectives of the people present in the room during the lecture and their immediate reactions to this content. This content provoked varied intellectual and emotional reactions, some of which viewers may identify with, and others with which they may deeply disagree. Overall, this Q&A session provides space for opening up some common concerns and questions that often arise in relationship to the abuse crisis.

- Speaking to the question of how people will be able to trust the Church again, Fr. McGlone quotes St. Ignatius of Loyola, “Love is shown in deeds not words.” What deeds do you think we need to do as Church to restore trust?
- Fr. McGlone explains that abuse of power is the root of the sexual abuse crisis, and clarifies that there are a number of common misconceptions regarding the abuse crisis – including the idea that most abusive priests are gay and that clerical celibacy is the cause of the crisis. Why do you think that explanations often focus on these misconceptions rather than questions of power?
- Instead of the “bad apple” model of discussing the abuse crisis, Fr. McGlone speaks of the bad apple in the bad barrel. What kind of corrective is this making to the “bad apple” model?
- Fr. McGlone discusses the need for a more robust lived theology of “Catholic intimacy,” which is not just about sex but a wholistic, integrated relationality. Teaching Catholic intimacy should begin in the home and extend out into the parish and wider community. When you hear the phrase Catholic intimacy, what comes to mind? What obstacles are currently in the way of living this Catholic intimacy? How might we begin to live into this healthy, wholistic intimacy more fully?
- Fr. McGlone discusses a number of liturgical spaces and actions that parishes and dioceses might provide for praying for victims and survivors of sexual abuse. What, if any, of these practices do your local church communities participate in currently? Are there further practices they might take up?

Resources:

Survivor Support

If you have been the victim of abuse in the Catholic Church, please reach out to someone. Below are contact points that can help.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline	800-656-HOPE (4673) or online chat
Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests	Assistance Line: 1-877-SNAP-HEALS (877-762-7432)
Victim Assistance Coordinators	Click here to contact a victim assistance coordinator in your diocese.

- For reports and documents on the abuse crisis, educational information, and steps on how to take action, visit <http://catholiclayresponse.com/>.
- Fr. McGlone begins with the words from the anointing after baptism, a part of the **baptismal rite**. Spend some time in quiet reflection with these words:

The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
has freed you from sin,
given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,
and welcomed you into his holy people.
He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation.
As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King,
so may you live always as a member of his body,
sharing everlasting life.
All: Amen.

The entire baptismal rite can be found here:
<http://www.ibreviary.com/m/preghiere.php?tipo=Rito&id=103>

- **Ladislav Orsy, SJ** is a canonical theologian who served as a peritus (expert) at Vatican II. His work on Vatican II and lay leadership, referenced by Fr. McGlone, can be found in his book *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates*, chapter 3: “Discourse on the Laity: A Sacred Power,” pp. 35-45.
- **The John Jay Report**, formally titled the *The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States*, is a 2004 report by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The report is based on surveys completed by the dioceses of the United States. It can be found here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/The-Nature-and-Scope-of-Sexual-Abuse-of-Minors-by-Catholic-Priests-and-Deacons-in-the-United-States-1950-2002.pdf>
- **Richard Sipe** was a Benedictine monk for 18 years, and then a lay psychotherapist who became one of the first experts on clergy sexual abuse, writing on this issue as early as 1990. His books are available online and in bookstores.
- **Sr. Veronica Openibo, SHCJ**, is a Nigerian religious sister who addressed the pope and bishops at the Vatican sexual abuse summit on February 23, 2019. Her address can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoEI_8dTzgi&t=32s
- **Ronald Rolheiser** is the president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, and an expert on spirituality. His reflection, **On Carrying A Scandal Biblically**, discussed by Fr. McGlone, can be found here: <https://ronrolheiser.com/me/uploads/2014/02/scandal.pdf>