

Abuse Response Team
Final Report with Appendices * of work product for archival purposes
May 15, 2021

In October of 2018, following the widely publicized Pennsylvania report of widespread clerical abuse and the exposure of Cardinal McCarrick's abuse of seminarians and minors, Bishop Zarama offered a Mass of Reconciliation and facilitated Town Hall meetings which several STM laity were invited and in follow-up conveyed their responses to Father Scott. Father Scott offered STM Listening Sessions and received feedback from the parish. An Abuse Response Team was appointed by Father Scott to develop recommendations for our parish that were to respond to the ongoing crisis as we continued to see investigations concluded and reports released. (Appendix A1,2,3)

This team was formed charged with exploring three primary areas: education, awareness and support. The group members are Cindy Neely (chair) Barbara Wasik, Kathy Roundtree, Joel Morgenlander, Marianne Mitchell, Deacon Stephen Yates, Adrienne Yates, Steve Caiola, Barbara Reynolds, Mary Ellen McQuire, Dick Hinson and Pat Grebe.

The team initially engaged in a process of prayer, discussion and learning from other parishes that had formed active response teams. These processes within our team led to a graphic depiction of the Body of Christ walking from the darkness of the abuse scandal toward the light and defined our body of work to move forward. (Appendix A4)

Four subgroups were formed: support/healing of victims, support/healing of the laity, education of the parish, and clericalism/clergy visibility. Each subgroup was charged with identifying the objectives to be accomplished and an action plan to accomplish the objectives.

The objective and accomplishment of each subgroup is outlined below. Appendices are arranged to chronicle each group's work with documentation. An overall objective was to archive the work of ART for future teams that may be charged again to address clergy abuse. That objective is fulfilled through this final report.

Support/Healing of Victims (Appendix B1)

The primary objective of the subgroup charged with support and healing of victims was to identify support and help for victims who are self-identifying as victims of abuse including triaging services and financial support for ongoing counseling. The guiding principle here is what is not healed is passed on.

The subgroup's accomplishments are as follows:

1. A Mental Health Resource list was developed and made available to staff and pastor as including a process for referral. In addition to staff, the resource list was made available to the spiritual direction ministry. A process for referral for the underinsured was obtained and distributed. (Appendix B2)
2. A Brochure was developed, requested by a victim of clergy abuse, to distribute to the parish. The brochure is an educational pamphlet educating parishioners on how to respond when an adult or child discloses to you that they have been sexually abused. Our response is often the determining factor in how/if that person will continue to tell their story to you—or anyone and seek help. The brochure also included how to report and resources for help. (Appendix B3)
3. Parish Novena for the clergy abuse scandal in conjunction with Respect Life was developed and implemented.
4. Proposal for parish funding of a Faith Based Retreat for Women Survivors of Sexual abuse: approved by Father Scott for 2022. This retreat covers the majority of the cost for retreatants. (Appendix B4)
5. Diocesan grant requested to support the retreat at Father Scott's request. Approved following the meeting with the Bishop.

Support/Healing of the Laity

The primary objective of this sub-group was to provide a forum to grieve, lament the betrayal felt and pray for the Church. Various informal gatherings of laity occurred organically to support one another in their anger, sadness, grief. These informal gatherings began some momentum to offer a formal gathering and a full weekend to gather and pray and discern.

The subgroup's accomplishments are as follows:

1. Group Spiritual Direction by Pat Grebe in Feb. 2019 focused on the scandal. A group of 12 gathered formally to pray with Little Pieces of Light (C1)
2. Diocesan booklet Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal available for Parishioners
3. Survey of parish on their reaction to the scandal and requests for how to proceed. (We had very limited participation).
4. Distribution of Bishop Barron's book to all parishioners: Letter to a Suffering Church
5. Father McGlone weekend. (Liturgy, Teaching, Discussion) (Appendix C2)
Fr. McGlone spent a weekend at STM in October, 2019. He met with a small group of parishioners over lunch, led three major presentations with extensive Q and A (including one in Spanish) and presided over every Mass. As both a survivor of priestly sex abuse and as a clinical psychologist, Fr. McGlone was highly qualified to speak extensively and empathetically on this topic. Many parishioners attended the Masses and approximately 200 attended the presentations.
6. Facilitated Discussions were conducted in the parish and next steps identified (Appendix C3)
7. Liturgy of Lament, Healing and Hope developed (cancelled due to Covid) (Appendix C4)
8. Prayers of the faithful include the victims of abuse each week at Sunday liturgy and this is ongoing.

Education Sub-group

The primary objective of this sub-group focused on information regarding sexual abuse to examine contributing factors for how this crisis came about in the church and correction of misinformation of causes and effects. The recommendations would also focus on prevention and on better education for adults, teachers and children. (Appendix D1)

The subgroup's recommendations and outcomes are as follows:

1. The members of the Abuse Response team explored Virtus as a comprehensive education to be developed for education of families.
2. Agreement was reached to obtain the Virtus program free of charge.
3. The members of the Abuse Response team completed certification in Virtus (Appendix D5)
4. Ministry leader was identified and curriculum outline was developed from Virtus and the John Jay report to educate the parish.
(Appendix D2, D3, D4)
5. Educational document on historical background and canon law developed for education. (Appendix D 6)
6. Virtus proposal developed and pursued with Father Scott and Diocese Appendix 7a and b). Evaluation post presentation favorable 4.6/5. (Appendix D8). The proposal was denied in favor of the existing SET training required by the Diocese.
7. An education Series titled Crisis: Clergy Abuse in the Catholic Church from The Catholic Project at Catholic University of America was offered for nine consecutive weeks via livestream. (Appendix D9)
8. Scheduled weekly discussion groups following each podcast were offered for nine weeks. (No participation)
9. A recommendation was made to Father Scott and the parish staff to develop a comprehensive family ministry and education effort for all topics related to prevention of abuse that would teach and support parents on how to talk and educate their children on grooming, predators, boundaries, safety, and internet safety etc.

Clericalism and clergy visibility sub-group

The objectives of this sub-group were to explore the structural causes and processes that allowed for such a broad cover-up to occur, seek transparency, and recommend how to respond to Pope Francis' admonition that "clericalism is an illness in the Church".

The comprehensive objectives set forth for the sub-group, to be pursued in conjunction with the full response team, are outlined as follows and substantiated with resource identification in Clericalism 3.0 (Appendix E1). These objectives highlighted a call for evaluation of current structures, processes and expanded roles for the laity. (Refer to Appendix E2 for a comprehensive evaluation of specific objectives and action plans.)

The subgroup's recommendations and outcomes are as follows:

1. The quest for best practices was never formalized but proceeded on an *ad hoc*, informal basis primarily through the efforts of Steve Caiola. It was Steve, for example, who alerted us to the talks given by Fr. Jerry McGlone in Atlanta that led to our bringing him to STM.
2. Recommendation was made to Implement the 'Parish Good Governance Test' and the 'Parish Council Self-Assessment' from the Voice of the Faithful Website.
3. An extensive document was prepared that both defined clericalism and also delved into the common (that is, not specific to STM) organizational and cultural practices, procedures and norms (including lay acquiescence) that perpetuate it. The document was presented to and discussed with both priests and two deacons.
4. There was an intent expressed at Pastoral Council to have some members of the Council elected with a target of spring, 2020 for this to happen.
5. A proposal was developed and presented to Father Scott for 2 live streamed, facilitated panel discussions featuring the Bishop and 3 knowledgeable individuals who could speak to the role of the laity, opportunities and barriers to greater laity involvement present in canon law and the formation and protection of seminarians. This effort emerged from the facilitated discussions post Fr. McGlone with a desire to hear more from the bishop and to engage more directly with the diocesan office (Appendix E 3).
6. The subcommittee met with the Bishop to discuss the proposal for the live-streamed panels and to present the accomplishments of ART. The diocese did not approve this proposal for the panels. In lieu of the panel discussion, the Bishop is planning on a speaker to address the clergy and diocese on clericalism in 2022.
7. The subcommittee was invited to provide a response to the Bishop of additional thoughts following the meeting with the Bishop. (That response is found in Appendix E 4).
8. The Abuse Response Team concludes it works with acknowledgement from Father Scott for its efforts and accomplishments. (Appendix E 5)

This final report is respectfully submitted by:

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*The noted Appendices are work product archived for the purpose of providing historical background and perhaps foundational work should another task force be called forth to address clergy abuse in the future.