

WE ARE THE CHANGE THE CHURCH IS AWAITING

Today, our Church faces one of the most serious challenges to its vitality and longevity. The clergy sexual abuse crisis has shaken Catholics to their very core. But, in the midst of this disbelief, anger and despair, Catholic Organizations for Renewal (COR) met in San Antonio, Texas (November 7-8, 2018) in advance of the national Call To Action meeting.



Linda Pinto

COR is a consortium of Catholic reform organizations who have met consistently since 1991. Their goal is to collaborate, communicate and be in community to further a Vatican II church. CORPUS has been there since their very beginning.

The discussions were sobering, yet deeply spiritual. "Taking the temperature" of the progressive reform community caused us to wonder, yet inspired us to persist. Undaunted, we affirmed that the Spirit continues to guide and move us – individually and corporately -- and we will continue to listen to her call.

22 two people represented the following organizations at the COR meeting: Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church, Call To Action, Catholics for Choice,

CORPUS, DignityUSA, Ecumenical Catholic Communion, FutureChurch, Quixote Center, Roman Catholic Womenpriests, South East Pennsylvania Women's Ordination, and Women's Ordination Conference.

Our first day opened with prayer followed by a Round Robin session. This is an opportunity for organizations to report, not only on their activity, but how it has addresses and furthered the progressive catholic movement. We were especially gratified to hear details of the public witness in Rome during the Synod on the Youth. While there were ten women (religious sisters) invited to audit the Synod, they did not enjoy the privilege of voting that their male colleagues had. #Votes for Catholic Women drew attention to the lack of equality. What was actually achieved was gaining the attention of the *New York Times* who hailed leaders Kate McElwee, WOC and Deb Rose-Malivec, FutureChurch as modern-day Catholic suffragettes.

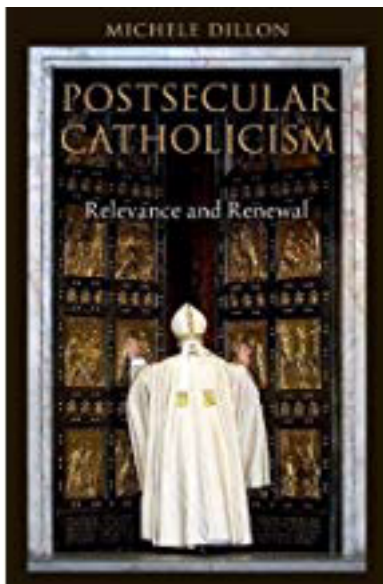
We were blessed to have Dr. Michele Dillon, a sociologist from the University of New Hampshire, as a presenter. She conducted a



Dr. Michele Dillon

training session on “The Euphemization of Power in the Catholic Church” (her PowerPoint presentation is also available on the CORPUS website).

She examined the underlying dynamic that the hierarchy uses to mask, mislead and in some cases deceive church people (laity) worldwide. One participant stated that she was a “challenging speaker” and wondered if she might be available to give a session or two at the bishops’ retreat in Chicago. (Her Irish brogue and charming demeanor belie the sharpness of her insightful, penetrating comments.) She responded by saying she would welcome the opportunity – “I’m open to speaking to all types of groups, because what I present is facts, data, survey results, not my own opinions.”



Dillon’s book “*Post-secular Catholicism: Relevance and Renewal*” is available from Oxford University Press (A 30% discount is available at www.global.oup.com/academic: enter discount code: AAFLYG6).

The remaining portion of the meeting was used to develop strategy to address the issues presented to us by these times. There was consensus that reform organizations serve as a “home” or “oasis” for Catholics seeking a Vatican II church. Resources are being developed that can be downloaded for small faith communities.

Public witness/actions are being scheduled for the Bishops meeting in November (Baltimore); their retreat (called by the Pope) in Chicago in January; a meeting of the Presidents of the Conferences worldwide in February; and the US Bishops meeting in Baltimore next Spring. Plans are also in the works for a national listening session; a speaking tour; and a People’s Tribunal. Information will be forthcoming.

It was 80 degrees in San Antonio, and the populace hit a record 44% voter turnout for the just concluded mid-term election.



The Alamo: San Antonio’s Symbol of Hope

For Corpus members, there is no blessing richer in San Antonio than a visit with Bob and Molly Walden. They were the first couple to chair a national conference (1993). Bob served several terms on the Board and his guidance and wisdom remain evident in CORPUS today.

By Linda Pinto