**SFDS on the Clergy Sexual Abuse and Cover-up Crisis**

**ACTIONS**

*Committed to as a result of Sept. 27 & Oct. 18, 2018 meetings*

1. **Become an educated parish which models actions on the items below.**
2. Subscribe to National Catholic Reporter (NCR), America magazine, and become a member of Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) as a parish and use information from these sources in bulletins, website, handouts, etc. (see resources at end)
3. Laity should be involved in selection of staff, especially when the time comes to select a new pastor..
4. Find out what actions the Bishops/Pope have already taken**\***

Partial answer:

* The 2002 [Dallas Charter](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm) <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm> commissioned by the USCCB, greatly reduced subsequent abuse (i.e. programs like Virtus and required reporting to civil authorities, but did not significantly impact cover-ups.
* The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PDCC) appointed by Pope Francis has been hampered by Vatican politics.

1. **Individual actions**
2. Write letters to diocesan, USCCB, Vatican leadership expressing one’s concern and advocating for actions like significant lay involvement
3. Write letters to secular press.
4. Encourage individual subscriptions to NCR and membership in VOTF.
5. Sign relevant petitions.
6. Consider participation in rallies, protests, and other public actions
7. Promote prayer and penance, i.e. fasting.
8. **Multiply our efforts (beyond individual and parish actions)**
9. Invite other diocesan parishes to a joint meeting of listening and discerning action responses.
10. Petition the archbishop to call a diocesan synod for decision-making on the issue of sexual abuse/cover-up and clericalism.
11. Propose a lay-led diocesan synod that would focus, among other issues, on decision-making in the church.
12. **Reach out to survivors of sexual abuse**

Partial Answer: One of VOTF’s ministries is “[Healing Circles](http://www.votf.org/content/broken-vessel%E2%84%A2-healing-circles).”

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1. **Investigate Diocesan/Parish financial accountability/transparency**
2. Are there public records of Diocesan settlements with survivors?
3. Does our parish publish regular financial reports so we know how money is spent?

Partial Answer: SFDS parish has both a Parish Council and Finance Commission. Only a Finance Commission is required by Canon Law. Parish Councils are optional.

1. **Write a mission statement for our group (Do we need a name?)**

offered to write a mission statement and upon approval, send it to the bishop.

**PRINCIPLES**

* Promote lay leadership that is vested with real authority, i.e. a lay majority on boards with decision-making power.
* Combat clericalism whether by priests, vowed religious, or lay. (Although ordaining women, optional celibacy, and having a majority of laity on boards can help reduce clericalism, the abuse of power, and undue deference to hierarchy, it does not guarantee that any of these people with authority might not also be tempted to clerical privilege. It is a spiritual attitude of humility and honesty that needs to be cultivated.)
* Lay people must step up to their Baptismal responsibility as full disciples of Christ.
* Watch out for ourselves**.**

A vocal, activist group can attract attention from the hierarchy and be punished by being shut down, dismissed, weakened as a parish, staff fired, etc.

Being an advocate for justice can be time-consuming, stressful, and draining. It takes a deep spirituality to stay faithful.

* It has to be BIG

**RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON CLERICAL SEXUAL ABUSE & COVER-UP**

* **Archdiocese of Cincinnati**: [www.cincinnaticatholic.org](http://www.cincinnaticatholic.org)

Resources and Publications:

* Documents on procedures for reporting abuse
* Statistics of priest abuse in Archdiocese
* Sex offender registry

Recent Sacred Heart interview with Archbishop Schnurr

* **National Catholic Reporter** <https://www.ncronline.org/>
* **Voice of the Faithful** (VOTF) <http://www.votf.org/>
* Healing Circles <http://www.votf.org/content/broken-vessel%E2%84%A2-healing-circles>
* **Bishop Accountability** <http://bishop-accountability.org/>
* **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** (USCCB) <http://www.usccb.org/> ,
* The 2002 [Dallas Charter](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm) <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>
* **America Magazine** <https://www.americamagazine.org/>