

In a recent letter to the editor in THE HOUR, the writer stated that Voice of the Faithful is not as successful in dividing the Church as they had hoped. It should be noted that, at the very first gathering of area Catholics concerned over the abuse scandal, the first action taken was to write to Bishop Lori to offer to work with him toward addressing the crisis in our church.

This was the first step in forming a chapter of VOTF in this Bridgeport diocese. Our purpose was, and continues to be, to work together, laymen and laywomen and clergy to address the sex abuse scandal which has gravely affected the entire Catholic church.

The dictionary describes “faithful,” as the author stated, as “steadfast in allegiance, firm in adherence, loyal.” Does loyalty require blindness to wrongdoing? Can one be loyal and steadfast while questioning authority in seeking truth and justice? The members of VOTF continue to serve faithfully in all areas of church life, as Eucharistic Ministers, lectors, musicians, ushers, teachers, etc.

As the author states, “the faithful are the Church.” And as adult members of our Church, we have a responsibility to address the wrongs we see, and to seek the truth. To do otherwise is to act as children, handing over our responsibility to the “elders,” the hierarchy, to make decisions for us.

Remember, it was under the watch of that same hierarchy that the horrendous sexual abuse of children was perpetrated and continued unchecked until the victims themselves and their supporters brought it at last to light.

Rather than focus on the small number of clergy who have left other churches to join the Catholic church, as the writer does, should we not look at the vast numbers of Catholics who no longer participate in the Church: those who have formally left to go elsewhere, those who have simply stopped coming. Do we not concern ourselves with these?

The writer suggests “You move on.” We suggest that we move on, after we heal the wounded, and change the culture (not the faith or the doctrine) in which our innocent children were abused. We move on only after the victims of clergy abuse have a voice: when they are heard and heeded; when they can trust again. We move on, when the leadership of our Church is open and responsive to her people.

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