

June 25, 2007 – Response to “Catholic Lay Group Tests Strategy Change”  
Edward N. Wilson, 38 Garden Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201

To the Editor:

In Catholic Lay Group Tests a Strategy Change (National Report, June 24), in which Pam Belluck discusses Voice of the Faithful, she attributes to Sister Mary Ann Walsh, a spokeswoman for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the opinion that calling for an ecclesiastical review of the issue of mandatory celibacy for Roman Catholic priests will not ingratiate Voice of the Faithful with the American Bishops. Sister Walsh is quoted as saying, “Don’t waste the bishops’ time about it.”

Our organization has no desire to unnecessarily annoy bishops. However, we are sorry to hear that they feel it would be a “waste of time” for 360 bishops to even discuss an issue that researchers believe to have had a role in the culture of hierarchical secrecy. Secrecy is what exacerbated the mishandling over many decades of the sexual abuse of children by clergy. The fact, confirmed by Sister Walsh, that the bishops “can’t do anything about it” is precisely the problem. American bishops comprise a substantial part of the governing body (magisterium) of the whole Church. This self-proclaimed ineffectuality is the very reason Voice of the Faithful is calling upon the Holy See at the Vatican, and not our own bishops, to initiate this crucial review.

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