

Silencing Courageous Catholics Is Detrimental to the Catholic Church

<http://votf.org/Press/pressrelease/051908.html>

Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) believes that Cardinal Roger Mahony's ban on Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, author of *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Power of Jesus*, which forbids his speaking at Catholic sites in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, harms the Catholic Church.

“Is this the way American bishops respond to Pope Benedict's call to do everything possible to heal the Church?” asks Dan Bartley, president of Voice of the Faithful. “Why is a loyal Catholic bishop prevented from asking honest questions in his search for the truth in the aftermath of the worst scandal in the modern Church?”

Bishop Robinson argues in his book that the tragedy of the sexual abuse scandal impels all Catholics to re-examine the fundamental issues that permitted the abuse to take place, including Catholic attitudes towards power and sexuality.

Cardinal Mahony made his decision when he was informed that the Australian Bishops' Conference is investigating the book because some of the issues Robinson raises may cause concern about doctrinal errors and some statements in the book may be contrary to Church teaching.

Those who read Bishop Robinson's book carefully may question such conclusions. Bishop Robinson obviously loves the Church and is trying to help us heal from the abuses which he saw first-hand when he was co-chair of the National Committee for Professional Standards in Australia.

Asking questions is not an attack on truth but an attempt to clarify it. During his trip to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI acknowledged that the sexual abuse crisis was very badly handled. In light of the Popes comments, blocking an open and honest discussion about what caused the crisis, as Cardinal Mahony has done, is appalling.

Voice of the Faithful supports dialogue in our faith community – between and among all the faithful. Dialogue inevitably introduces questions. Had more of us questioned Church behaviors over the last several decades, it is unlikely that thousands of children would have been abused by thousands of clergy. Bishop Robinson's view of a path towards healing is one alternative. Voice of the Faithful encourages all Catholics to listen carefully and to discern wisely.