Opinion



08.26.2018

Young people dressed like Pope Francis wait for the pontiff to celebrate Mass at Phoenix Park in Dublin Aug. 26. (CNS/Paul Haring)

by Dennis Coday

View Author Profile

dcoday@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @dcoday

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

August 27, 2018
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

We in the newsroom at NCR's HQ and our reporters in the field were prepared for a busy weekend, but we had no idea what would come. Let me give you a brief outline of events.

Friday, the Irish Catholic Church was in the midst of an international celebration of famlies, though not without some glitches, as NCR's Jamie Manson reported: **Chasing rainbows at World Meeting of Families**

Saturday, Pope Francis flew into Dublin for a visit to the World Meeting of Families, but the issue of sex abuse followed him. He addressed it head on: **In Ireland, Francis admits church failed to protect children, caused 'grave scandal'.** He went so far as tell (reportedly) a group of **eight Irish survivors that the abuse cover-up was, Francis spoke in Spanish, "caca."** His translator clarified for the group: "Literally filth as one sees in a toilet."

We settled in for what we thought would be a relatively quiet Saturday night, but then a bombshell landed. Early Sunday morning (the middle of the night in the U.S.), the National Catholic Register, the newspaper owned by EWTN, and the radical rightwing anti-abortion website Lifesitenews.com released an 11-page letter from a former Vatican ambassador to Washington, Archbishop Carlo Viganò, filled with accusations against dozens of former and current high-level Church officers, **claiming there was a systemic cover-up of allegations that now former cardinal Theodore McCarrick was sexually abusing seminarians.** Francis was in on the cover up, Viganò charged, and he demanded the pope's resignation.

News of the letter broke just as Pope Francis was beginning Mass for the family gathering, where he again addressed the abuse issue (but not the letter). **Pope begins Mass in Dublin with penitential plea for abuse scandals**

As you can imagine, reactions to the letter came fast and furious, as Heidi Schlumpf reported: **Vigano letter draws fiery rhetoric from pope's opponents**

Michael Sean Winters quickly weighed in: **Vigano letter exposes the putsch against Pope Francis**.

When Francis got on the plane to return to Rome, he spent about 45 minutes with journalists, our Joshua McElwee among them. Francis advised journalists **to "read the [Viganò's] statement attentively and make your own judgment."** "I will not say a single word on this," the pope said of the letter. "I think this statement speaks for itself, and you have the sufficient journalistic capacity to draw conclusions."

Advertisement

Meanwhile, here in the U.S., pew-sitting Catholics are trying to come to grips with what they are seeing unfold:

- **Protesters outside churches call for Wuerl's resignation, church reform**
- **The elephant in the sanctuary: Did the abuse crisis come up at Mass?** Sr. Rose Pacatte asked her Facebook friends what they are hearing and seeing.

A meditation by Sr. Nancy Sylvester: **The clerical church in search of its soul**

Barry Hudock, a former Erie diocesan priest named in the recent Pennsylvania grand jury report, **has long held prominent positions in the world of Catholic publishing.**

And in other news:

Sen. John McCain, a former prisoner of war who embraced patriotism loudly and religion quietly, died Saturday at the age of 81. **Sen. John McCain: Known as a veteran but also a man of quiet faith**

One of my favorite authors -- Paul Elie: **What the Catholic Church Crisis Should Teach Us About President Trump's 'Witch Hunt' Claims**

Katelyn Beaty, former managing editor of Christianity Today, says criminalizing abortion is not the way to abolish abortion. **Support families instead.**

A related NCR editorial: **Supporting women is key to pro-life agenda**

In a study of 40 peace processes since the Cold War, Olivia Holt-Ivry says researchers found that when only men sit at the negotiating table, cease-fires fall apart. **Women Make Peace Stick** (You may have to register to read this, but it's worth it.)

Pope Francis' exhortation **Gaudete et Exsultate ("Rejoice and Be Glad")** has inspired many. NCR and Celebration have the resources to help you on your **journey of 'small holiness'**.

- Start your day inspired with daily Scripture reflections. Join NCR's sister publication, Celebration, for **Daily Bread**, a series of short reflections written by four authors who meet regularly to share the readings.
- Or reflect on **Pencil Preaching by Pat Marrin**. Every morning Pat Marrin breaks open the Word with a pencil sketch and a short meditation.