Opinion



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NCR correspondent Peter Feuerherd introduced his weekly round-up of parish news, the feature we call **The Field Hospital**, by noting that while across the U.S., Catholics gather to address the sex abuse crisis, the mission work of the church continues: welcoming refugees, feeding and sheltering the poor and supporting the emotionally distressed.

In that same vein, let's turn our attention first this morning to church workers in the vineyard, and revisit the NCR occasional series that explores the Christian ministry of peaceful witness and nonviolence. We call the series **Making Peace**, and here's the two latest additions:

- If Colombians truly seek peace, they must give up vengeance and seek reconciliation by forgiving themselves and one another, said a priest who is devoting his life to such a mission. **Consolata priest helps Colombians find**

forgiveness after long war

- Catholic Church leaders are urging the Colombian government to protect community leaders who are being targeted by hired assassins. **Church urges Colombian government to protect local leaders under threat**

Without a question, however, the issue of clergy abuse and episcopal cover up is dominating the Catholic news world right now. A few days ago I was asked to put together a summary of what has happened in recent weeks, so I wrote this **about the events that happened through the summer months.**

But the story continues to advance. Yesterday we learned that after the bombshell Pennsylvania abuse report, **at least five other states are launching investigations, mostly by or through states' attorneys general into Catholic dioceses.**

"How do we cope with all this? What should we be doing?" I have been asked. NCR contributors have been thinking about these same quesations and here are some of their answers:

- Kent P. Hickey has some advice based on his experiences working with the Seattle Archdiocese: **Every Catholic, lay and clergy, is called to confront evil of abuse**
- Marilyn McMorrow, a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Georgetown University professor offers the following, which she described as "a thought exercise." **Penance proposal for bishops: six months in real world**. McMorrow wonders if others have similar thought excercises to offer.
- Virginia Herbers, an Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, reflects that "Right here and right now, the broken heart of Christ is evident in the wounded members of his body, most especially the victims of sexual abuse and the victims of abuse of ecclesial power." She advocates for a **revolutionary act of reparative love**

All of NCR's reporting on the sex abuse crisis is gathered in on spot, a channel page we call **Accountability.**

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Our podcast **NCR In Conversation**, which the Catholic Press Association this summer called "best podcast," is ready to begin its third season. In the first episode, which will be available later today, NCR editors and correspondents discuss the sex abuse crisis.

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.

And in other news we are following:

Michael Sean Winters, who says he has been doing penance this week by watching the confirmation hearings for the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh, has a two part look at the judicial theory called "originalism."

- **Kavanaugh hearings prompt a closer look at originalism**
- **Nuances of constitutional originalism leave originalism behind**

Cardinal Raymond Burke, one of Pope Francis' leading critics, said Sept. 6 he is still pressing Francis **to respond to an earlier set of questions about his views on marriage.**

Russia warns US of pending attack in Syrian area with US troops

Carl Bernstein Calls For Congressional Hearings To Determine Trump's Fitness

Congressional budget analysts predict the deficit for the full year will be about 19 percent bigger than last year's shortfall, the result of both the Republican tax law and spending boosts approved by lawmakers earlier this year. **Federal budget deficit increases 79%**. Throught July, the shortfall totals $684 billion.

Economists at Bloomberg are saying, in terms of the government's underlying fiscal stance, **a strong economy makes the projections of large deficits more worrisome.**

Commentary: Though no one in Washington will admit it, our nation's finances are in deep trouble. Spending is up, revenue is down, and this will only get worse. **Trump trillion-dollar-plus deficits are putting America on a path to fiscal ruin**.

This column began with a reference to Pope Francis' image of the field hospital, so let's end with a quote from San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy: "The image of the church as a field hospital points to the reality that the church is never remote from human experience, never self-referential if it is to be faithful to its mission. Rather the church must always be enmeshed in the real lives and sufferings and challenges and joys of the people of God and the whole of humanity."