News
Vatican



Bishops listen to a speaker Nov. 14 at the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. (CNS/Bob Roller)

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This week, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops met in Baltimore for their annual fall meeting, where the sex abuse crisis in the Catholic Church was the main agenda item. At the Vatican's request, the U.S. bishops didn't take action as anticipated on their planned proposals to address the sex abuse crisis.

On the show today:

- Heidi Schlumpf, NCR national correspondent
- Michael Sean Winters, who covers religion and politics in his column Distinctly Catholic
- Dan Stockman, national correspondent for Global Sisters Report

Background reading:

- A surprise Vatican request that the annual gathering of U.S. Catholic bishops delay planned votes on proposals to address clergy sexual abuse evoked outcry, even leaving some of the prelates at the meeting confused, reported Heidi Schlumpf and Joshua J. McElwee. Two survivors of clergy sexual abuse who addressed the annual meeting of the U.S. bishops both expressed "deep disappointment" about the delay. Some bishops have been more concerned about the reputation of the church than about victims of sexual abuse, indicating "clear corruption" and "a blind spot" that must be addressed, said Archbishop Paul Etienne of Anchorage, Alaska. In the end, Brian Roewe reported, the three-day public portion of the fall general assembly concluded with no final decisions, in part due to the Vatican request to delay votes until after a February meeting in Rome.
- Just ahead of the bishops' conference, Michael Sean Winters wrote that if the U.S. bishops fail to address the scourge of clericalism, then the church in the United States will wither and die. The Vatican decision to delay voting on concrete action items landed like a bombshell, he wrote. What could be going on? While the bishops' proposals were well designed to clean the outside of the cup, it is the inside that needs cleaning. This year, it was good as always to see friends and colleagues, but what Winters witnessed was "amateur hour at the U.S. bishops' conference."
- The U.S. bishops' conference has endorsed Sr. Thea Bowman's sainthood cause , which is being undertaken by her home Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi. The trailblazing African-American sister was the first black member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, the first black woman to address the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and an inspiration to thousands of people with her words and songs.
- Read all of NCR's reporting and analysis from the bishops' meeting in Baltimore here.

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