

FIDELITY AND COURAGE NEEDED NOW

“Fidelity, fidelity, fidelity.” That was Father Richard John Neuhaus’ answer to the clergy sexual abuse crisis that exploded in 2002. It still is a great tonic, but it is incomplete: courage is also needed.

Priests need to practice fidelity to Church teachings, in both their spiritual and behavioral life. They also need to exercise courage: when one of their fellow priests, or bishops, is guilty of serious misdeeds, they need to be confronted. Keeping quiet is not only cowardly, it is un-Christian. Here are a few examples.

After the disgraced Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland stepped down—he not only admitted to sexual relationships with men, the diocese paid \$450,000 to settle a claim with his boyfriend, Paul Marcoux—he confessed that he did not believe in the Church’s teachings on sexuality.

Weakland rejected the Catholic Catechism’s labeling of homosexual inclinations as “intrinsically disordered.” “Those are bad words because they are pejorative.” It’s a small leap from thinking homosexuality is normal to actually engaging in it.

“If we say our God is an all-loving god,” Weakland said, “how do you explain that at any given time probably 400 million living on the planet at one time would be gay? Are the religions of the world, as does Catholicism, saying to those hundreds of millions of people, you have to pass your whole life without any physical, genital expression of that love?”

If Weakland were an honest man, he never would have sought ordination. He joined an organization whose strictures on seminal matters he could not support, lived a double life, and

expected the faithful to pay for his lifestyle, as well as his lawsuits. To this day, he is lionized by left-wing Catholics, the ones who call themselves social justice advocates.

Weakland is a prime example of what happens when fidelity is absent. He is also a prime example of what happens when those who knew of his gay lifestyle remained silent. Their lack of courage allowed him to engage in sexual activity with men for years.

Msgr. Kevin Wallin is another splendid example of what happens when fidelity and courage are not practiced.

In 2013, Wallin went to prison for dealing crystal methamphetamine. He was the former pastor of the Cathedral of St. Augustine in Bridgeport, Connecticut and was secretary to Bishop Walter Curtis in 1987. He was also secretary to Bishop Edward Egan (who would later become Archbishop of New York and a cardinal).

Wallin was more than a drug dealer. He was a cross-dressing, clinically diagnosed narcissist who lived a promiscuous homosexual lifestyle. Lots of people knew he was a sicko, and none did anything about it.

“Neighbors said men streamed into Monsignor Wallin’s apartment,” the New York Times noted, “many of them arriving in cars like BMWs and Corvettes. Sounds of sex could be heard. He stored cases of good wine in the basement, as well as glass pipes and bottles of butane. He was seen doing his laundry, which included lace panties and other articles of women’s clothing.”

But no one said a word, including his fellow priests. In a session with other priests, in which they spoke of God’s mercy, Wallin turned to them and said, “You don’t really believe that, do you?”

When I read that in 2013, I knew I would never forget it. It

was not Wallin's lack of fidelity to the teachings of the Church that struck me the most, it was the lack of courage on the part of his cohorts. When a priest confesses to other priests that he no longer believes, *and they do nothing about it, they are as bad as him.*

Fortunately, there are priests who are coming forward, and one of them is featured in this edition of *Catalyst* (see pp. 8-9).

Father Robert Altier gave a startling homily on August 19, one that was widely disseminated by the Catholic League. He is a priest at the Church of St. Raphael in Crystal, Minnesota. I have shortened his homily to fit our page limitations.

It is clear that Father Altier loves the Catholic Church and is sickened by recent revelations of old cases of priestly sexual abuse. I am grateful that he gave us permission to publish an excerpt of his remarks.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the extraordinary courage exhibited by Cardinal Timothy Dolan. It is he who is responsible for blowing the whistle on Theodore McCarrick, forcing his resignation as cardinal.

To be precise, it was the New York Archdiocese's Independent Compensation and Reconciliation Program that enticed one of McCarrick's victims to come forward, and it was Cardinal Dolan who then acted on the accusation. Bias against the hierarchy, stemming from some members of the laity and even the clergy, accounts for why Dolan is not being given the credit he deserves.

Most priests and bishops are good men. Unless we have reason to believe otherwise, we should give them our support and not allow those who are stampeding against them to prevail. A mob mentality is dangerous.