

# PHILLY PRIESTS SENT BOGUS SURVEY

Recently, Voice of the Faithful, a dissident Catholic group, launched an agenda to manipulate priests and the public in the Philadelphia area. The Greater Philadelphia chapter of the organization sent a letter to the more than 900 priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia asking them to agree with its position that Pennsylvania lawmakers should abolish the statute of limitations for sexual abuse, opening a two-year window for civil suits.

The letter by Marita Green of the Steering Committee had the audacity to say that supporting its position is a “measure of integrity.” Included was a “survey” which asked priests whether they agreed with their stance. To top things off, it explicitly said that “the number [of postcards] that are not returned will be recorded as votes against abolishing the statute-of-limitations shield.”

How cute. If priests did not agree with those whose goal it is to selectively bankrupt the archdiocese for incidents that allegedly occurred decades ago, they were to be branded heartless. That’s what this was all about. Voice of the Faithful was deliberately trying to engineer this “survey” so that it could go to the media “demonstrating” how few priests of “integrity” there were in the Philadelphia area. But it didn’t work—the Catholic League had already sabotaged this effort.

During Holy Week a Philadelphia priest sent us the correspondence he had received from Voice of the Faithful. In response, we mailed our own letter (click [here](#)) to the 900-plus priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia on Holy Thursday. Our letter was designed to short-circuit this agenda. We are happy to report that several priests left

messages on our answering machine over the Easter weekend, and sent us letters commending us for our work.

The day after Easter we issued a news release calling Voice of the Faithful out for its deceitful tactics. A few days later they responded with more deceit. In its news release, the dissident group went on the defensive but never addressed our central concern, namely, the bogus nature of its so-called survey. How telling. Instead of directly challenging us, they deceitfully skirted the issue. Their "survey," of course, was nothing but a sham.

Voice of the Faithful members, as disclosed in a real survey a few years ago, are mostly comprised of elderly Irish men and women who, despite earning on average over \$100,000 a year, do not support their own organization (only 25 percent donate money). Maybe that is why Voice of the Faithful, which likes to lecture the Catholic Church on finances, is collapsing under financial duress (it is sorely in debt). That it is morally bankrupt as well is beyond dispute.

Catholics were rightfully angry when they learned about the sexual abuse scandal a decade ago. But now their anger is turning on those whose passion for revenge has nothing to do with justice; it's all about settling old scores. We will fight these demagogues to the end.