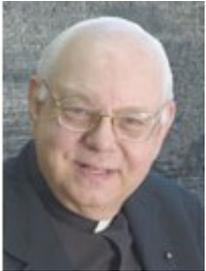


The Church has good news to tell



Hard to believe. It has been 20 years, an entire generation, since the American Catholic bishops met in [Dallas](#), trying to cope with the explosive, then recent, revelation, previously discounted, concealed and denied, of sexual abuse of youth by [priests, bishops](#) and other Church personnel.

The [meeting](#) captured national attention. Reporters from every community in this country, and dozens from foreign countries, were present. So many reporters were there that the hotel designated a huge ballroom and equipped it with a large screen, the size of those in movie theaters, enabling accredited reporters to watch and hear proceedings.

Several, including Our Sunday Visitor's representatives, I among them, were invited to sit at a table in the room in which the bishops met.

Next to me was a reporter from one of the largest and best-known newspapers in this country, from one of America's largest cities, home to well over a million Catholics. Her reports of the [Dallas gathering](#) ran every morning on the front page of her paper. Many people formed their opinions about the meeting, the issue of sex abuse of the young by priests, bishops and Church figures, and indeed of the Catholic Church, based upon what she wrote.

For me, it was hard to follow the discussions because of her frequent questions, almost all of them almost childish, and certainly grossly uninformed, regarding the Church itself.

This continued throughout the meeting.

Often, I thought to myself, how sad it was that in this

critical matter, many Catholics in her hometown, stunned, feeling betrayed and angry as they were, received their news on the issue from a source so badly unaware of so many compelling details.

This story is one example and is one explanation of why the Church in this country long ago established a network of media, headed by Catholics, employing Catholics, using their staff's knowledge of things Catholic, and respect for Catholicism, to transmit to Catholics the genuine news of developments in their Church, and of world events and trends that affect Catholic discipleship.

Reliable reporting, and good Catholic commentary, still are needed by Catholics, but this country, and Western Europe, are facing a dilemma in all mass communications. Long distinguished media, Catholic or otherwise, are losing audiences. As expenses mount, many are [ceasing operations](#).

Catholic media, Our Sunday Visitor, EWTN, local diocesan newspapers, radio and TV, and even parish bulletins are [trying to cope](#) with this reality. So are the Los Angeles Times, the Boston Globe, the New Orleans Times-Picayune, Fox, CNN, MSNBC, ABC, the History Channel, sports magazines, commercial radio stations and so on.

Not even the best and brightest professional has found the silver bullet.

Some years ago, supplying great sums of money, the American bishops inaugurated "CTNA", the Catholic Television Network of America, hoping that it was the answer. Never capturing the mass of American Catholics, it was dissolved.

Add to the mix the impact of social media. Post the absurd charge that St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta plotted to kill all wildlife, to provide more food for humans and that she personally took a pick in hand, dug into the ice, and planted a nuclear bomb, which she secretly built in her convent, under

the North Pole to contaminate outer space, thereby halting government appropriations for space endeavors, and someone will believe it and repeat it.

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During the Dallas meeting, three bishops left the hotel and walked through angry demonstrators to a nearby restaurant for dinner. They decided to return to the hotel by taxi. The taxi brought them safely to the hotel's door, but the driver refused to charge them.

An immigrant from Honduras, he said, "After what 'our' Catholic Church does for people, in Honduras, here in Dallas, everywhere, how can I charge you?" The bishops tipped him. "Buy something for your children."

Msgr. Owen F. Campion is OSV's chaplain.