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WHO IS THIS LIGHT OF THE WORLD? Behind the title of Pope Francis's procedural rules managing clerical and religious sexual abuse in the Catholic Church: "Vos Estis Lux Mundi"

Christopher Longhurst — July 25th, 2021

Pope Francis's 2019 procedural rules managing the crimes of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church was titled *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, "You are the Light of the World."^[1]

This title was chosen from Matthew 5:14. The pericope continues:

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.^[2]

This choice of passage is telling because it implies that speaking out, reporting abuse and uncovering the coverups give light for everyone.

Reflecting on the meaning behind the Pope's choice of title, this article proposes that those who speak out about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church or report that abuse are significant players in being this "light of the world." The case is made by correlation of title to topic.

The discussion first considers the metaphorical significances of lamp, light, and bowl, along with the corollary of darkness. The lamp is interpreted to symbolize the voice which speaks out. The light symbolizes the truth uncovering the coverups. The bowl symbolizes the concealment and denial of the abuse, along with the silence of the people of God. The darkness symbolizes the abuse itself, and its concealment and enablement.

Implications of the meaning of Matthew's parable of light in relation to clerical child sexual abuse and the Christian's duty to act are given, suggesting that on account of directives in *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, some current Catholic Church teachings would not apply.

Conclusions reached with biblical evidence will support the idea that speaking out is a Christian duty, a virtue which brings healing for the Church, and being silent on this issue is for Christians a sin of omission.

Metaphorical Significances of Light (*Phōs*)

The meanings behind the symbols of light, lamp, lampstand, and bowl evoke poignant imagery in relation to clerical child sexual abuse. Considering the biblical meaning of light, in the First Testament, the Hebrew word for light ("*aur*") is evocative, suggesting what is of God and portraying one of God's first creative works (Gen 1:3). In biblical history light counters darkness and chaos (Exod 10:23). It is also used metaphorically to represent life (Ps 56:13), salvation (Isa 9:2), and the commandments (Prov 6:23).

In Christian theology, based on biblical teaching, light symbolizes the mechanism that removes the darkness of ignorance and falsehood.[3] It also contains a moral dimension. Genesis 1:4 states that "God saw that the light was good," thus, light comes to symbolize goodness in contrast to the evil associated with darkness.

The Greek word *phōs* used in the Second Testament to describe Jesus was not a physical light, but the illumination of a spiritually dark world. In John's Gospel (8:12), Jesus referred to himself as "the light of the world" and stated that "whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." This is seen by the believer in God's truth and actions being reproduced in those who are honest and upright. In this sense, the light possesses both an intellectual-knowledge basis and a moral-action basis.

The moral-action basis of light as goodness becomes more explicit in the Second Testament. Ephesians 5:8-10 tells God's people to "live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord." It also warns to "have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11).

In the biblical passage that Pope Francis used to title his new rules, Jesus also refers to his faithful followers as "the light of the world" and tells them to "let your light shine before others." In this sense, the light is likewise both truth telling and good deeds.

These intellectual and moral dimensions of both *being* light and *transmitting* light to counter darkness would surely have inspired the Pope to title his new procedural rules managing clerical and religious sexual abuse "*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*."

Metaphorical Significances of Lamp (*Lychnon*) and Lampstand (*Lychnian*)

The Bible uses the terms lamp and light synonymously.[4] Considering the lamp, Jesus said, "a city on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl." [5] In Jewish homes of biblical times, lamps were partially closed reservoirs made of clay.[6] They had a hole on top to pour in oil and a spout at one end into which a wick of flax or cotton was placed. They were relatively small vessels and gave off only modest light.

In the context of clerical child sexual abuse, the light-bearer, like a lamp, could be any person who shines the light of truth despite how unpleasant or distressing that truth may be. Such emitting of light could be the voices of the faithful speaking out, reporting the abuse by lodging complaints with the relative civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Other ways of emitting God's light could be actions such as reaching out to victims and survivors through all available means such as church-bulletins, parish notices, media advertisements, and giving support for therapy, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, job training, and the like.

Lamps could also be the tying of colourful ribbons to fences at churches or schools to show solidarity with victims and survivors of abuse and encouraging others to speak out against the abuse. They could also be intentional peer-support groups and restorative justice processes. These could all be lamps because they figuratively emit light for the afflicted. Pope Francis's new rules would also be a lamp, as would any guidebook on points of procedure in reporting instances of sexual abuse.

Regarding the lampstand, Jesus advises his followers to put the lamp on a stand (Matt 5:15). Since Jewish homes in Jesus' times were relatively small and usually one-roomed houses, to emit maximum light, lamps were put on a lampstand. A lamp on a lampstand would transmit light to everyone in the house, otherwise, a lamp would have been carried around the house to find one's way during the night.[7] In practical terms, therefore, the lampstand is simply the instrument that enables the light to reach everyone in the house. It is what allows as much light as possible to be emitted.

Figuratively, in relation to sexual abuse in churches, the lampstand becomes a metaphor for any device which permits more effective speaking-out and therefore more light transmission. Lampstands could be bold and clear speech, large church-bulletins, big and bold notices, or constant media advertisements to raise more awareness. They could be the relentless voice of the victim and his or her advocate crying out for justice. They are the vehicles that allow God's light to shine more effectively in truth and in action. The key idea here is that light is to be transmitted as best as possible, and not concealed, and the lampstand helps in that transmission.

Metaphorical Significances of Bowl (*Modion*)

To extinguish the light, lamps were placed under a bowl or a "bushel." The bowl in verse 15, therefore, represents the device used to extinguish the light. In relation to clerical sexual abuse, the bowl is what causes the darkness. This would be such factors as denial, cover-up, secrecy, concealment, shame, silence, and victim silencing, amongst others. Bowls would especially be Christians who remain silent in the face of such crimes, and whose silence transforms into an evil silence by the absence of the witness that is due. This is true for Christians because "silence in the face of evil is itself evil." [9]

There are different kinds of evil silence such as that of victims silenced by their abusers and those who covered for the abusers, and that of those who knew and kept silent. While silencing is a sin of commission, keeping silent is a sin of omission because it prevents knowledge of the abuse from being told. It thereby blocks the evil from being exposed and eradicated. In this sense, both kinds are examples of evil silence.

Bowls could also be those persons who shield abusers because such an act would contribute to the darkness. This would include Christians who cover up or deny abuse within their churches and communities, especially church leaders who confound the Church with something other than its members and through a false sense of loyalty place institutional reputation or financial loss before honesty and compassion. They fail to grasp the serious and long-lasting consequences of sex crimes especially perpetrated against children. This leads them to minimize the crimes, an aspect of an ill ecclesial culture, causing further harm, both spiritual and psychological, and ongoing damage and suffering.

This harm is intensified when victims and survivors reach out to them for healing, but they respond by telling the victim to move on. Yet they fail to provide assistance for the victim to do so. Jesus' very ministry was one of healing and all Christians, though especially church leaders, are called to emulate that ministry.

Bowls could also be occurrences of institutional betrayal such as a punishment for reporting abuse or maltreatment for speaking out against abuse.

Significance of the Darkness

Considering the darkness, Genesis 1:4 further states that "God separated the light from the darkness." This separation implies a kind of opposition between light and darkness insofar as the light represents what is good and true, and the term *skotia* (darkness), as used in John 8:12, becomes associated with evil and the subsequent misery of a life lived in darkness.

In the biblical context, the figurative uses of darkness are in contrast to light. This contrast also appears in 1 John 1:5 which applies light to God and states that "God is light" and in God "there is no darkness at all."

Further, the contrast between light and darkness provokes a metaphorical distinction between good and evil. As light is the symbol of God's truth and goodness, darkness is the opposite. While the good walk and work in light, the wicked walk and work in darkness (Ps 82:5; Prov 2:13; Jn 3:19; Rom 13:12). The implication here is that those who do not follow in Jesus' footsteps to speak the truth and perform good deeds, live in darkness. The light of God is not in them.

In the context of clerical child sexual abuse, the darkness is not only the abuse, but also the hiding of the abuse in a culture of silence and denial. Echoing the words of Pope Benedict XVI, clerical child sexual abuse has "obscured the light of the Gospel to a degree that not even centuries of persecution succeeded in doing." [9]

The darkness is also the shame that surrounds the abuse. As well, it is the failure to speak out that augments such darkness. The agency of the darkness is those who prevent the light of truth from shining forth. Such people bring the Church into disrepute. But speaking out has the opposite effect. It helps restore the credibility and effectiveness of the Church's authentic mission by providing the antidote to the coverup and silence.

The darkness is also the silence. For Christians, being silent on issues that require condemnation would betray them because Christians may not remain silent in the face of evil. This is true because it says so in the Bible. The Christian Scriptures teach that Christians will be held to account for failing to speak out

against such crimes. James 4:17 says: "If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them." Again, Paul told the Ephesians, "have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them" (5:11). Leviticus 5:1 states: "If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about, they will be held responsible." Esther 4:14 says, "for if you remain silent at this time ... you and your father's family will perish." Proverbs 31: 9 says, "Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Likewise, Isaiah 1:17 says, "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed." Ecclesiastes teaches that there is "a time to be silent and a time to speak" (Eccl 3:7).

These biblical passages oblige Christians to not remain silent when confronted with evil. More significantly, they imply that silence is tantamount to coverup and complicity. Therein lies the darkness. Brian Clites from Case Western Reserve University, referring to Catholics in the context of their response to clergy sexual abuse, went so far as to argue that their "continued silence would amount to concealment and complicity."^[10] A Christian who remains silent about the sexual abuse of a child by a priest would be guilty of the sin of omission because, according to the Bible, all Christians are obliged to speak out against such crimes. Further, for the Christian such omissions could be seen as acts of disobedience against God because when God tells Christians to speak up and not remain silent, and they refuse, then they have obviously disobeyed. It stands to reason, therefore, that instances of clerical and religious child sexual abuse are times to speak up.

In short, those who deny the abuse or keep silent are like those who hide the lamp under a bowl rather than putting it on its stand to give light to everyone in God's household. They thereby cause others to live in darkness and the darkness to persist.

Implications for Clerical Child Sexual Abuse

The meaning behind Pope Francis's choice of Matthew 5:14 for his title *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* suggests that just as it is impossible to hide a city located on a hill-top, so Jesus' disciples are called to let their good deeds be seen, so that they shine and are not hidden under a bowl. Verse 16 says, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds." The implication here is that speaking out against the crimes of clerical and religious child sexual abuse is a very good deed. This is supported by the aforementioned biblical passages that oblige Christians to speak up when facing injustice and not to remain silent.

The uniqueness of this context is that it is not hiding the light that causes the darkness but hiding the darkness that prevents the light. The irony here is that exposing the darkness enables the light to shine more brightly. This is the difference and uniqueness of Pope Francis's application of Mathew 5:14 to such a repugnant reality as children being sexually abused by priests and church leaders. In other words, to hide the dark truth becomes an immoral act. Conversely, to expose this truth destroys the darkness of not only the ugly truth, but also the wickedness of the bad deed. The effects would be healing for victims and survivors and restorative for the community. The necessary changes could then be made so that the gospel message may be more credible and the church's mission more effective.

In other words, in all cases of clerical and religious sexual abuse, especially of children, the prevention of darkness requires that the truth be uncovered. The pertinent question becomes: "What truth?" An affirmative-positive answer would be the light of Jesus' good deeds. The reality is, however, the truth of certain crimes should not be kept hidden. When the truth is unpleasant, some may argue that it is better to not know such truth and therefore to hide it. But when not knowing this truth causes the crimes to continue, then the lack of knowing becomes bad because it prevents the crimes from being stopped. This is the reason why such truth must not be hidden, and also, why the hiding becomes an obstruction of justice and goodness. It is also the reason why hiding the truth or not speaking out against it brings the Church into disrepute.

When faced with knowledge of abuse, the counterforce is to "let your light shine." The implication here is twofold. First, Christians are to let their good deeds counter the abuse and show that the abuse is an aberration and not the norm. Secondly, they are to stop the abuse by speaking out against it and by holding the perpetrators and their enablers to account. While good deeds serve as a counterforce, an indirect exposure of the darkness, speaking out, direct speech against the abuse, is a proactive response.^[11] In other words, to live in the light, Christians are required to expose the darkness directly by reproofing and correction, and indirectly by living good lives. Both responses overlap insofar as speaking out under the circumstances is a very good deed.

Either way, the Christian is obliged to act. Again, verse 16 says, "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds." This teaching emphasizes what Jesus calls his followers to do, to let their light shine. In this sense, Matthew 5:14–16 concerns discipleship-action. It informs of a purpose for transmitting

light, one that requires good actions. It cannot be one of believing alone, such as the light of Christian doctrine, but rather the light of truth in action.

In this sense, from a Christian perspective, knowing about the crimes and abhorring them is not enough. Again, the Bible requires Christians to speak out in the face of injustice; they may not do nothing. Again, Matthew's parable of light calls for action. It requires exposing the crimes by shining the light of truth on them. Ida Wells, American investigative journalist and human rights educator, summarised this when she said that the way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.

Further still, for the Christian, the senselessness of trying to hide this sordid truth lies in the belief that these crimes will be revealed at the future judgement of believers, at the Judgement Seat of Christ (the Bēma). According to the Scriptures, "God will bring every deed to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (Eccl 12:14). Paul avers that "on the day when, God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ" (Rom 2:16). Paul also said that the sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever (1 Tim 5:24–25).

For the Christian, therefore, it would be futile to try to hide them today. Instances of child sexual abuse by clergy are times to speak up, otherwise Christians will eventually be held to account for failing to do so.

Unsuitable Church Teachings

Returning to the idea of the unsuitability of certain Catholic teaching for the authentic mission of the Church, at the recent Faith-Based Redress Hearing of the New Zealand Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, John Atcherley Dew, Catholic Archbishop of Wellington, acknowledged that the "systems and culture of the Church allowed abuse to occur" and that "these systems and culture failed [victims], and must change."^[12] Consequently, thousands of children have suffered because of those systems and that culture, yet Archbishop Dew gave no concrete examples of what the abusive systems and culture were that had failed, or what changes were needed.^[13] Some factors such as the culture of secrecy embedded in Catholic Church administration, along with the exploitation of the sacrament of confession to elicit sexual advances have been suggested.^[14]

Article 2489 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that: "The good and safety of others, respect for privacy, and the common good are sufficient reasons for being silent about what ought not be known or for making use of a discreet language."^[15] At a private hearing of a survivor of clerical child sexual abuse, Commissioner Paul Gibson of the New Zealand Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care mentioned that this teaching appeared to be "justification for cover-up."^[16]

On account of Pope Francis's new procedural guidelines, it seems clear that this article would not apply because the Pope has asked that such crimes be reported.^[17] It was the cover-up of the abuse that prevented knowledge about it from getting to the public. In turn, this hindered reporting, which sequentially prevented the crimes from being stopped and perpetrators from being brought to justice. Therefore, when it comes to clerical and religious child sexual abuse, Catholic teaching that some crimes ought not to be known would be unacceptable because the "good and safety of others, respect for privacy, and the common good" cannot be "sufficient reasons for being silent about what ought not be known or for making use of a discreet language."^[18] In fact, based on this new papal teaching, the safety of others and the common good are the very reasons *to* speak out against such crimes. They ought to be known and the attempts to minimise them by the use of discreet language ought to be avoided.

Further, article 2489 also states that "the duty to avoid scandal often commands strict discretion. No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it."^[19] Such teaching also seems unsuitable in relation to clerical and religious child sexual abuse because there is no duty to avoid scandal here. "Scandal is an attitude or behaviour which leads another to do evil."^[20] On the contrary, it was scandalous that church authorities not only failed to speak out, but that they knew and let it continue to happen.^[21] Such failure kept society unsafe by enabling abusers to re-offend. But speaking out and reporting the abuse would prevent such further scandal.

Moreover, as already noted, church teachings such as article 2489 would not apply because failure to speak out and report clerical child sexual abuse would be considered inherently sinful based simply on biblical teaching.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that clerical child sexual abuse can be so contemptible that its details would best not be discussed except when absolutely necessary, for example, for redress purposes. Such discussion could trigger further pain for the victims. The key is not to minimise the seriousness of the crimes, but expose them to the extent necessary to eradicate them.

Pope Francis has implied that those who do speak out against these crimes and report the abuse would be the light of the world because they carry forth the light of truth. He made this clear in *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* when he stated that any well-founded motives to believe that a transgression had occurred required reporting. In fact, he requested obligatory reporting.[22]

There is, however, an inherent problem in the Pope's directive because he requested reporting the abuse to the Local Ordinary, that is, to relevant bishops and congregational leaders. He stated that the responsibility to enact concrete and effective actions to counter abuse "falls, above all, on the successors of the Apostles, chosen by God to be pastoral leaders of his People." [23] However, some bishops and congregational leaders became major contributors to the problem because of how they mishandled abuse complaints. Unprecedented harm has been caused by those who were expected to be the first to speak out, not only failing to do so, but in fact systematically letting the abuse continue to happen.[24]

Aiding such an abusive culture could be other Catholic Church teachings such as the idea that the right to communicate truth is conditional.[25] While the application of this teaching requires looking into the circumstances of each case, surely this doctrine would at least never apply in instances of clerical and religious child sexual abuse. Perhaps Robert Orsi, scholar of Catholic studies at Northwestern University had in mind these teachings of keeping silent, using a discreet language, and conditional truth-telling when he asserted that certain Catholic beliefs are, at least to some extent, intrinsically abusive.[26] Orsi concluded that Roman Catholicism had effectively "created this crisis [of clergy sexual abuse] out of its own future and within the tradition itself—and then it compounded the horror by refusing to listen to or believe [the victims], or to take steps to protect them and other children." [27]

The Virtue of Speaking Out

It stands to reason, therefore, that the crimes of clerical child sexual abuse must be known and, again, that good Christians may not do nothing in response to these crimes otherwise they sin. Speaking out against such crimes and their coverup, therefore, becomes a virtuous act. It serves as a corrective to the evil silence that enabled the abuse and subsequent attempts by church leaders to prevent people discovering the truth as perpetrators were moved from school to school and from parish to parish where they continued to abuse. Likewise, reporting abuse becomes a virtuous act as well.

The acts of speaking out and reporting abuse may be seen as akin to the Greek notion of *parrhesia*, the virtue by which we dare to speak up. The term *parrēsia* denotes speaking candidly and with courage, or asking forgiveness for speaking openly and truthfully, particularly when the speech is not welcomed.[28] *Parrēsia* is a form of open and honest speech, in particular towards someone in authority who needs to know the facts so as to properly fulfil their duty. The Scriptures contains many examples.[29] When the high priest questioned Jesus about his teaching, Jesus replied, "I have spoken openly to the world ... I said nothing in secret" (John 18:20). *Parrēsia* is a form of brave speech. In the Roman Catholic liturgy, when the Eucharistic assembly is invited to pray the Our Father, the priest says, "*audēmus dicere*" (we dare to say).

As a virtue, speaking out can also be understood as a form of blessing. The word "benediction" which means blessing, comes from two Latin words, *bene* meaning "well" and *dicere* meaning "to say." [30] In this sense, those who speak out on clerical child sexual abuse bless the world because they reveal the truth in order to prevent further harm. This blessed speaking may be interpreted as a kind of dutiful public lament that brings the truth into a broader social conversation so that the necessary changes may be made.[31]

Speaking out and reporting abuse may also be understood as a form of "bearing witness," the simple act of being willing to speak out about what we know and believe. This is a vital aspect of the Christian mission. According to Clites, Catholics "must bear witness to the Catholic experiences of abuse that [survivors] have suffered." [32] This kind of witnesses would, therefore, be borne by all members of the Church because Jesus required that his followers be involved in his ministry: "we must do the works of him who sent me" (John 9:4). This requires that Christians acknowledge how the abuse has damaged the witness of the Church and work towards genuine restoration. Such restoration would require that Christians recognize within their communities where the abuse is still occurring today and make the necessary changes to stop it.

Further, Catholic teaching states that witness is an act of justice that establishes the truth or makes it known.[33] In this sense, everyone has a right to it. It is not conditional, contrasted with article 2488 of the Catholic Catechism that states that "the right to the communication of the truth is not unconditional." Therefore, when witnessing wrongdoing, every act of silence becomes sinful because there is a duty to speak up as the aforementioned Scriptures indicate. The light that people see would be the good works that Jesus' followers perform in uncovering the abuse.

Consequently, and perhaps most significantly, those actions stand as acts of justice because they serve to counter the injustice. On the other hand, remaining silent in the face of such wrongdoing would harbour that injustice.

In the effect, speaking out and reporting abuse are responsible Christian acts, virtues that serve to break the evil silence of that which ought to be known. Speaking out is a virtue of bold and honest speech, a form of public witness and reporting abuse is a blessing for the Church and for the world. It is, therefore, Christian to speak out against the injustices committed by church leaders. It is, in fact, one of the most courageous and honourable things a Christian can do today. This may be the essential reason why Pope Francis chose this title because in the opening section of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* he called for “concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church.”

Conclusion

In choosing Matthew 5:14 to title his new procedural rules, Pope Francis focused on the need to shine the light of truth on the darkness of clerical and religious child sexual abuse hidden for decades from public view. He reaffirmed that true discipleship must result in actions to counter this scandal as a test or measure of belief. Most importantly, he indicated that this truth must not be hidden but brought into the light for all to see, and that the Christian is especially required to do so.

This article has shown that the title *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* implies that speaking out against clerical child sexual abuse and reporting that abuse gives light for everyone. The implication shown here is that those who speak out, shine the light of truth to uncover the abuse so that victims and survivors may be healed, perpetrators brought to justice, and the future may be safer for all members of society. The effect of the good act of shining the light of truth in turn produces more light. Any counteraction would have the opposite effect.

Pope Francis has placed the onus on all good members of the Catholic Church to act, to step up and speak out with courage against the crimes of clerical and religious child sexual abuse and institution abuse, and against those who cover for the abusers. Like Jesus, he has called all Christians to be the light of the world. Those who fail to do so, silent Christians and those who refuse to report, would live in darkness. But those who speak out and hold abusers and their enablers to account, they are the light of the world. Thus, the verdict is out! In fact, it has been out for over two millennia. John declared: “Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.” (Jn 3:19-20).

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[1] Pope Francis, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (‘You are the Light of the World’) VELM, Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio*, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 9 May 2019.

[2] All biblical quotations are from the NIV.

[3] See Michael J. Wilkins, *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed., Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 1996), Page Required.

[4] Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), 29.

[5] Matthew 5:15.

[6] See Robert H. Smith, “The Household Lamps of Palestine in New Testament Times,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 29.1 (Feb 1966): 1–27.

[7] Smith, “The Household Lamps of Palestine in New Testament Times.”

[8] This popular expression is commonly attributed to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran Theologian. However, it cannot be found in Bonhoeffer's writings and no other primary source has been found.

[9] Pope Benedict XVI, *Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Ireland*, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* 19 (March 2010), 4. http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20100319_church-ireland.html.

[10] Brian J. Clites, “Breaking Our Silence: A Primer for Research on Clergy Sexual Abuse,” *American Catholic Studies Newsletter* 47.2 (Fall 2020): 16.

[11] See my article, Christopher Longhurst, "Theologies of Lament, Listening and Healing: Responses to the Institutional Crisis of Clerical Child Sexual Abuse," *Catholic Thinking, WelCom*, 1-April-2019.

https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_welcom/catholic-thinking-theologies-of-lament-listening-and-healing/.

[12] Royal Commission of Inquiry, Faith-Based Redress: Phase Two – Part 1, 26 March 2021, 10:15:15-22.

<https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/public-hearings/about/faith-based-redress-hearing/>.

[13] See "Catholic Church child sexual abuse scandal," *BBC* (26 February 2019).

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44209971>. In New Zealand alone, the number of cases of abuse within the Catholic Church exceeds 1100, which is only a preliminary figure according to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. See Andrew McRae, "Catholic Church on abuse: 'We are ashamed and saddened'," *RNZ* (23 March 2021). <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/438935/catholic-church-on-abuse-we-are-ashamed-and-saddened>.

[14] Wietse de Boer, "The Catholic Church and Sexual Abuse, Then and Now," *Origins* 12.6 (March 2019).

<https://origins.osu.edu/article/catholic-church-sexual-abuse-pope-confession-priests-nuns>.

[15] Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2nd ed (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), no. 2489.

[16] Paul Gibson, Royal Commission of Inquiry Abuse in Care private sessions, RC number: RC-02580-P5B8-001, 22 February 2021, p. 90. Please note that this file is not a public record at this time.

[17] See VELM, art.3 §1.

[18] See CCC.2489.

[19] CCC.2489.

[20] CCC.2284.

[21] See such reports as Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, England and Wales' IICSA Report, the Pennsylvania Report in the USA, and Ireland's Murphy Report, amongst others. See also the original Spotlight report in *The Boston Globe*, "Church allowed abuse by priest for years," 6 January 2002.

[22] VELM, art.3 §1. This need for reporting was made more explicit in a subsequent instruction manual, *Vademecum*, 16 July 2020, on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of children and others committed by clergy.

[23] VELM, Intro.

[24] See footnote no. 26.

[25] CCC.2488.

[26] Robert Orsi, *History and Presence* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2016). See also Clites, "Breaking our silence: A primer for research on clergy sexual abuse."

[27] Orsi, *History and Presence*, p. 246.

[28] See Blue Letter Bible Lexicon, Strong's G3954 – *parrēsia*.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g3954>.

[29] The Greek παρρησία (*parrēsia*) occurs 32 times in 31 verses in the Greek concordance of the New American Standard Bible. See Blue Letter Bible. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?ot=NASB&strongs=g3954&t=kjv#lexSearch>.

[30] Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "benediction," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/benediction>

[31] See Longhurst, "Theologies of Lament, Listening and Healing: Responses to the Institutional Crisis of Clerical Child Sexual Abuse."

[32] Clites, "Breaking our silence: A primer for research on clergy sexual abuse," 16.

[33] CCC.2472.

