

Public Apologies for Crimes against Humanity?

**By Sister Maureen Turlish
National Survivor Advocates Coalition
May 27, 2009**

<http://www.nsacoalition.org/2009/05/27/commentary-special-to-nsac-mturlish/>

In the U.S. publication, the National Catholic Reporter, Dominican priest, the Rev. Thomas Doyle has this to say in the article, "Irish abuse report demands decisive action," (05/21/09):

"The report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse is not unique though it may well be the most shocking example of the reality of such a culture of evil. In the past two decades over two dozen reports have described physical and sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults by Catholic clergy and religious." (1)

Church authorities and individual religious communities of men and women are tripping over each other saying how sorry they are that this tragedy happened. A lot more than public apologies from cardinals, bishops, religious superiors and government officials are necessary here.

The government of Ireland made a deal with the Devil in agreeing not to prosecute or name any of the individuals, living or dead, who were party to the widespread torture and abuse of children as has been reported in the recently released Ryan Report.

The Holy See itself along with the bishops and superiors of every religious order implicated in this tragedy like the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Charity and the individual perpetrators, living or dead, who were ever convicted, credibly accused or known by church authorities to have raped, sodomized, tortured and abused the children in their care should be brought before the world court.

The two nuns who brokered the arrangement with the Irish government to limit the institutional Roman Catholic Church's accountability and transparency should be ashamed of themselves, I know I am.

They are Sisters Elizabeth Maxwell who was then the secretary general of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) and currently heads the northern province of the Presentation Sisters, and Helena O'Donoghue the leader of the Sisters of Mercy, south central province. Sadly, they personify the worst of the church's clericalism and patriarchal system, just in the female variation.

These are nothing less than crimes against humanity and they should be prosecuted as such.

The Holy See is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child even though it has never submitted one of the required compliance reports and I suspect that Ireland is a signatory to that document as well.

Every single God given right has been denied these children and they are deserving of some justice. They should get it from the world court and the sooner the better.

Only now are we finding out that the communities involved have met with governmental officials and the Conference of Religious and have said they "will not reopen discussions on the child abuse compensation deal agreed with the Government," while government officials are set to destroy all the evidence and testimony on which the Ryan Report was based. (2)

Recent comments by the new Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, have been less than helpful. "Courage" is not a word that comes immediately to mind when thinking of the Irish religious communities who were party to this debacle and Nichols was unwise to use it.

Neither Ireland's Cardinal Sean Brady or Archbishop Diamuid Martin seem to be able to exert any control over the 18 religious communities involved so it falls to the Holy See and the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to step in.

It is unbelievable that the government of Ireland cannot find the authority to void the damning agreement that was made with these religious communities in 2002.

That these communities in a statement released by the Conference of the Religious in Ireland (Cori) refuse to revisit this agreement while professing concern for the victims involved is disingenuous as well as insulting to those of us who are members of religious communities around the world. (3)

I suggest that Ireland's Cardinal Sean Brady and Archbishop Diamuid Martin meet with Pope Benedict XVI as soon as possible and impress upon him the necessity of action.

As Tom Doyle puts it, "there is something radically wrong with the institutional Catholic Church. This is painfully obvious because it allows systemic abuse and radical dishonesty to coexist with its self-proclaimed identity as the Kingdom of God on earth."

Anything less would amount to a sin against the Holy Spirit.

(1) <http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/irish-abuse-report-demands-decisive-action>

(2) <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/0525/breaking14.html?via=mr>

(3) <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/0525/breaking64.htm>

Sister Maureen Turlish is a member of the National Survivor Advocates Coalition. In addition, she is a Delaware educator and victims' advocate who testified before the Delaware Senate and House Judiciary Committees in support of Delaware's 2007 Child Victims Law. She can be reached at maturlishmndsnd@yahoo.com

