

Abuse and Authority

The Church's authority to restore sexually broken people with the power that raised Jesus from the dead hinges on her repenting from abusing the most vulnerable.

I just returned from what has become one of my favorite nations—Poland. Theologically, St. John Paul II paved the way for my conversion and St. Faustina permeated his take on gendered humanity with Almighty Mercy. These two Polish patrons ushered me into relationship with perhaps the finest Christians I know in the Living Waters world. Our third training there clarified the import of the Catholic Church to Poland. Hammered on all sides by cruel foes, the nation has looked to the Church as a bulwark against indignities that span centuries.

She now faces new challenges. Outside Church walls, LGBT+ activists bang on her doors with accusations that she is unloving and irrelevant; inside her walls, adult children of abuse are now claiming that her 'fathers' corrupted them and must be stopped if the Church is to be faithful to Jesus. Both challenges were palpable at our gathering; I saw both ugly defensiveness and beautiful repentance.

The threat to Poland of a 'gay' agenda fired up a rigid traditionalism in some participants. A few expressed contempt for anyone 'homosexual', not knowing that they were surrounded by 'them' in their small group. Mercy melted machismo as these 'super'-Catholics realized that their training peers had no political agenda other than repenting unto chastity. All found level ground at the Cross: one people under one Merciful Source. Hardened hearts softened, calloused hands dropped stones. Instead of adopting a Noah's Ark attitude—close the door and let the wicked drown—repentant ex-abusers committed to becoming Jesus' hands for all persons.

Add to the mix very recent clerical abuse allegations in Poland. Under this now familiar shadow, LW training participants were troubled, confused, and incredulous. Some coped by denying the charges, claiming anti-Church conspiracies of varying kinds. I would not have it. For every one brave soul who dares to break tradition by confessing how a cleric broke his or her body, there are a hundred more. In a flash I saw clearly how prideful denial of the Church's capacity to violate the most vulnerable is the essential tool God gives His enemy to fetter the Church's capacity to heal sexually fractured persons. No confession from the top, no splendor of the Kingdom for the broken below.

So we repented. I veered off my teaching and we as a group wept at the damage: real people, faithful sons and daughter of the Father, picked off by demonized fathers. This spirit of repentance longs to rest on us until every secret is exposed. I contend we must bear that spirit prayerfully until we see Him face-to-face.

Yes we repented, and yes we must seek a posture of repentance. After a while, I felt led to ask all persons sexually abused as children to come forward (if they so desired) in order to receive prayer.

I discerned that God was pleased by our posture, as I could smell the fragrance of healing. A dozen came forward, including two priests. In an unprecedented way, the Holy Spirit permeated these brave souls with a dense mist of grace, flooring many. People could not get up for around 15 minutes. I did nothing but watch while others prayed. When the glory lifted, relief and joy and lightness overtook the receivers. The Kingdom came. God gave tomorrow's blessing that day. He healed the broken-hearted.

'Restore our authority to heal, O God. Let not prideful self-protection get in the way of Your-Kingdom-come for the abused, persons most in need of Your touch.'

Please take time to watch our new video and become '[Chaste Together](#).'