

## **Behold the Lamb 3: Dirty Mother**

'In the Church, God has put Himself into hands that betray Him over and over.' Pope Emeritus Benedict

I was outraged. A well-known actress whom I understood from good sources to be a Christian of integrity starred in a film that featured 'gay' sex; she justified the movie--and lesbianism in general--as a beautiful glimpse of human potential. I have since discovered that she as a young teen had been sexually abused extensively by her youth pastor. Huh. Hard to make a case for chastity when your shepherd makes you the meal (EZ. 34:2, 3).

22-years-ago, a staff person from our ministry developed an elaborate plan to sexually violate two teenagers seeking chastity in our midst. He succeeded. His wickedness divided their lives and their families, and brought serious disgrace upon the churches we served as an organization. These two men struggle to see Jesus clearly now. A 'trusted' representative shattered their vision at its source.

That was apparent when we gathered as a healing prayer group in my parish one Lent and were gifted by a man who had just re-entered the Church for the first time since his priest violated him as a teen. Jumpy and suspicious, his breath sour with alcohol, he muttered something of how hard it was to be inside the place where night fell (EZ. 34: 12) and the Son has yet to rise. He appreciated our kindness but couldn't yet believe or receive it. How do you trust a dirty mother?

Wolves in shepherd's garb are equally opportunity destroyers: neither catholic nor evangelical, they are just profoundly disintegrated persons hiding in the folds of Mother Church. And Jesus is on the move, shaking out her trains with fierce love and empowering the defiled to speak. Her pastors must become prophets on behalf of those finding their voices—listening and tending to the distressed, while refusing to tolerate demonized ones who sacrifice little ones on the altar of their perversions, and who will do it again unless they are halted.

So we take our places as members of this one Mother. We love her by apprehending her monsters and refusing their monstrous eating habits. We do this on behalf of the consumed; why should they come home if we don't first clean house for them? We give them first place at the table, and dare to believe that Jesus in His divine mercy can transform shame into cleansing and healing.

Few Christian leaders abuse children. Yet when we fail to discipline those who do, we permit its stink to permeate the whole. Chastity is mocked; our common enemy is freed to roar about and take many captives. Like the drunk and dodgy man in my parish. Like the actress I mentioned who became an outspoken LGBTQ+ advocate. Or the two guys under my charge who were morally handicapped before becoming men. They weren't born that way. They were abused. Lord have mercy on us. Clean Your Mother, Father God.

'We cry out for those who were lost on that dark day, O God. Your house of healing became a house of horrors for them, O God. We are sorry for the violence done against them. We are sorry for slinging Your Name. Jesus, release Your flood of blood and water upon our corporal shame, beginning with the violated. Wash us and we shall be clean. No other way except through Your dying, and ours. Raise up trustworthy servants to help ensure the trustworthiness of Your house.'