

We are “One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church” – A Myth or Reality

Calling for a Dialogue within and across Laity Groups

We have **FAILED** to present and be one Church: We have **conflicting entities** with a **trust deficit**: We are on the **threshold of disintegration**

The current issues in the media indicate that there are many problems in the Catholic Church and these are surfacing on numerous fronts. Hence the Church appears to be in a slow ‘**Disintegration**’ mode with the pace accelerating rapidly. The report on the open rebellion by the clergy against Cardinal George Alencherry in Matters India (29 June 2019) supports this theory.

Further the lack of response to laity mails by the Pope, Pontifical Commissions, Nuncios and Bishops, Superior Generals and Provincials is forcing the laity to protest on the streets, go to civil courts and to the media. The excuse given are that the hierarchy are too busy. What makes it more insulting is that there is not even an acknowledgement. This is not only discourteous but can also be construed as arrogance or like German Bishop Wilmer says “Abuse of Power is in the DNA of the Church. In a nutshell this behavior by the Church hierarchy is creating that the church is NOT ONE. Hence, we would like to clarify our point of view as follows:

- We believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and so we share with you the pain and agony that has come upon the Church in these times. (“WE” includes the Laity, Diocesan and Religious as well as the Holy See, Curia and other Hierarchy) At the same time with great compunction we write to you to express our concern regarding the visible desecration of the face of the Catholic Church today.
- We believe that the Church is in a state of turmoil where the people of God have taken to the streets in protest, Ordained ministers are openly fighting among themselves and the civil courts are openly taking the Church task as she is rapidly losing her credibility both within herself and in Society. (Articles and Reports: *Laity and women religious protests, US courts on child abuse, Italian Bishops not following the Pope’s directives on the revised marriage annulment procedure and the Cardinal Alencherry – clergy rebellion case*)
- We believe that the church is in a state of emergency and we cannot take recourse to an “Ostrich” like approach. Meaning delayed response as seen in the Child abuse issue: Suppression to, Protection to Recycling to Non-disclosure agreements to Media investigations to civil courts and finally “ZERO TOLERANCE”. Too late.

This scenario indicates that we, the Church are driven into a “Reform Cycle” phase as is seen in the history of the church. This happens when the human element casts a shadow on the church thus obscuring her divine presence in the World. Nothing less than a deep Reformation will purge her of her human encumbrances. (Abuse, Corruption and Nepotism)

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we look forward to journeying with the whole church in restoring the true face of the church as envisioned by Jesus Christ.
Some inferences as to the root causes that brought about this situation

Weak Formation (For laity-adults and clergy-post seminary)

- Converted to Castaways (Laity left to survive – little or no adult formation)
- Ordained to Overlooked (Abandoned in a secular world to fend for themselves)

Outcome of Weak Formation

Poor leaders – Managing undisciplined clergy and confreres who are

- Inadequately equip to manage the Pastoral Care.
- Unable to manage secular functions appropriately

Situation Indicators

- There is a Pastoral care deficit in the Church today. Less than 15% of dioceses have pastoral plans and the clergy cleverly camouflage the situation. They only show us what they are doing but not how many of the flock they are catering to. This misguides many laity members who get carried away with a few events and the show business. Participation is minuscule. An example: Diocese and Parish Youth participation is less than 3% of the total youth. Some basic indicators of a vibrant Church are given below:

Vibrant Church - Indicators	Rating Scale Low 1-10 high	Examples
I. Worship	4-7	30-50% laity attend weekend services
II. Community	3-5	Less than 10% participate
III. Service	2-4	Less than 5% participate
IV. Education/Formation	2-4	Less than 2% participate

Behavioral Actions

1. Italian bishops do not follow Pope’s directives on revised marriage annulment procedures
2. Indian clergy do not accept Pope’s decision to reinstate Cardinal Alencherry.
3. Laity charging bishops for protection of child abusive clergy
4. Laity taking clergy to court on child abuse.
5. Bishops openly showing disregard for Pope’s Apostolic Administrator
6. Laity openly raising issues of fraud and church funds misuse by clergy
7. Clergy openly refusing transfers
8. Bishops recycling corrupt clergy
9. Clergy openly challenging bishops
10. Bishops openly admitting that the Church needs a new theology
11. Bishops openly stating that the abuse of power is in the church’s DNA
12. Bishops cannot collaborate to solve common problems. Make different statements openly.

Most of the Clergy and Laity know this and are silent observers. However, we have collected some reactions and statements which are shared below:

Observed Reactions:

- Passive observers are slowly moving away by decreasing participation.
- The more aggressive are resorting to civil courts and open protests
- The committed clergy are trying to cope with the situation the best they can and are slowly losing hope.
- Many of the first-generation laity and clergy are refusing to accept the ground reality

Some statements:

- Laity: My job is to put money in the collection box. If the priest misuses this God will punish him. It's not my problem.
- Laity: I know this and so do all the parishioners. However, if I take up this issue my neighbours will boycott me. No one wants to buck the trend.
- Clergy/Confreres: What can the provincial or bishop do. He can transfer me, that's all.
- Judicial Vicar: If the bishop does not follow canon law I can only make a suggestion to him. If I write to Rome, he'll make my life miserable or transfer me.
- Bishop: If I do not cooperate with the Conference of bishops no one can do anything. All direction has to come from Rome and on non-cooperation matters Rome is often silent.
- Provincial: The government took away over 100 acres of land given to us many years ago. But it does not matter as we were not using it.
- Clergy: Corruption and child abuse are common in the outside world. Why is the laity targeting priests? They fail to understand that after child abuse the priest goes to the pulpit and preaches the 10 commandments. The laity are watching. Recycling hid this in an unconnected world but not today.
- Bishops: We have invested so much in a priest we can't just let him go. We need to use his talents somewhere else. It appears that perception of the flock does not matter. Abuse of power in the DNA.

In conclusion we would like to emphasize that: We are one Church with entities in a serious conflict situation caused by a TRUST DEFICIT and which is on the threshold of disintegration. Serious collaborative (inclusive of all entities) reformation efforts and an immediate purging action is required to save the situation.

The internet links for many of the 12 points given above are given below. You may like to review the contents and make your own assessment of the situation.

We would be very happy to receive any feedback and provide any clarification.

In the spirit of evangelizing for a more vibrant church

Alan Doulton

Article Links are given below for reference

Articles and their Links

1. **Crux: Pope reads Italian bishops the riot act over delayed annulment reform**
Elise Harris May 20, 2019 SENIOR CORRESPONDENT <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/05/20/pope-reads-italian-bishops-the-riot-act-over-delayed-annulment-reform/>
2. **Priests protest Vatican's decision to reinstate Alencherry**
Press Trust of India | Kochi Last Updated at June 28, 2019 18:20 IST - https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/priests-protest-vatican-s-decision-to-reinstate-alencherry-119062801009_1.html
3. **Stealing God's Money: Church Fraud Exposed** (given below)
<https://www.agfinancial.org/blog/bid106654stealing-god-s-money-church-fraud-exposed/>
4. **Swindling Church Funds: Mangalore Bishop in Dock** (given below)
Organiser: *Prashanth Vaidyraj 13-Mar-2019 https://www.organiser.org/Encyc/2019/3/13/Swindling-Church-Funds-Mangalore-Bishop-in-Dock_amp.html*
5. **Some priests accuse Bishop of functioning in an arbitrary manner**
<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/pune-some-priests-accuse-bishop-of-functioning-in-an-arbitrary-manner-5245065/>
6. **German bishop says abuse of power is in Church's DNA**
<https://international.la-croix.com/news/german-bishop-says-abuse-of-power-is-in-churchs-dna/9108>
7. **German bishop says only a new theology can save the Church**
<https://international.la-croix.com/news/german-bishop-says-only-a-new-theology-can-save-the-church/10396>
8. **Church Cannot be Trusted to Police Itself**
<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/22/us/vatican-abuse-summit-intl/index.html> By Daniel Burke, CNN Religion Editor - February 22, 2019
9. **Nuns Demand Arrest of Jalandhar Bishop Franco**
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/nuns-demand-arrest-of-jalandhar-bishop-franco-mulakal/articleshow/65731797.cms>
10. **Leaked German report shows 3,700 cases of abuse of minors in 68 years**
NCR - Sep 12, 2018 - by Zita Ballinger Fletcher, Catholic News Service
<https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/leaked-german-report-shows-3700-cases-abuse-minors-68-years>
11. **Vatican's Secret Rules for Catholic Priests Who Have Children**
By Jason Horowitz and Elisabetta Povoledo Feb. 18, 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/18/world/europe/priests-children-vatican-rules-celibacy.html>
12. **Catholic Church sex abuse cases in the United States**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_sex_abuse_cases_in_the_United_States
13. **The *Spotlight* Effect: This Church Scandal Was Revealed by Outsiders**
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/02/catholic-churchs-sex-abuse-scandal-was-driven-outsiders/583489/>
14. **Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commission_to_Inquire_into_Child_Abuse
15. **Abolish the Priesthood**
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/to-save-the-church-dismantle-the-priesthood/588073/>