

## For the Record

### For the Record Archives

*This special section reviews news stories and provides more complete information about them.*

**Plain Dealer story on Clergy Abuse cases limits diocesan response**  
A Saturday, May 26, 2007 article in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* newspaper reviewed the status of local clergy who have been placed on administrative leave since March of 2002. The story neglected to offer the full response by the Diocese of Cleveland to the newspapers questions concerning these matters of clergy sexual abuse. Here is the full response.  
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**WKYC TV3 story trivializes Marriage and Priesthood**  
A story aired on WKYC TV3 News on February 16 and 18 was both unbalanced and replete with factual errors in portraying the sacraments of Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders in the Catholic Church.  
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**Clarification on local organization known as "FutureChurch"**  
Various publications in Northeast Ohio have reported stories concerning a locally-based organization known as "Future Church" or "FutureChurch." Here is the statement of the Diocese of Cleveland regarding an organization known as "FutureChurch."  
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**Clarification needed regarding Plain Dealer story entitled: Bishops Adopt Clarified Role for Church Laity**  
in the document Co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord: a Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministers.  
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**Plain Dealer story trivializes sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders**  
An article in the Sunday, November 13, 2005 edition of the Plain Dealer failed to properly portray the sanctity of the sacraments of Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders.  
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**Media coverage prompts clarification on Holy Love Ministries**  
Recent print stories on "Holy Love Ministries" located on Butternut Ridge Road in Eaton Township, Lorain County, the site of reported Marian apparitions and devotions has prompted this clarification from the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland concerning the operation.  
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**Misinformation regarding diocese contained in WOIO TV 19 news report**  
Information included in the September 28, 2005 Channel 19 story on Saints Cyril and Methodius Blue Ribbon Award was inaccurate.  
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**Plain Dealer column overtly offensive to the Church and new Pope**  
A response from the Diocese of Cleveland.  
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**Missing files TV story fails to balance information**  
A recent series of reports on WOIO TV19 in Cleveland focused on allegations that files related to the Diocese of Cleveland and the clergy sexual abuse scandal were missing and alleged stolen.  
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**Clarification in the matter of "Holy Love Ministries" near Elyria in Lorain County following two media reports**  
Recent print and television news stories focused on "Holy Love Ministries" located on Butternut Ridge Road in Eaton Township, Lorain County, the site of reported Marian apparitions and devotions. The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland issued this **CAUTION** in August of 1999 which still applies today.  
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**Poverty in Cleveland: Catholic Charities Director warns of pending housing crisis**  
The Cleveland Plain Dealer chose not to publish a July 1, 2004 opinion/editorial piece by J. Thomas Mullen on a potential housing crisis for the poor. Here is the text of his op-ed piece.  
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**Media coverage of Bishop Pilla statement incomplete**  
Media fails to report major points in statement on public officials and reception of the Eucharist.  
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**Plain Dealer again distorts facts about Diocese of Cleveland in story about Boston closings**  
A May 26th Cleveland *Plain Dealer* newspaper story about the Archdiocese of Boston closing parishes included more misinformation about the Diocese of Cleveland.  
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**Catholic Schools Future Examined in Plain Dealer Story**  
On Monday, May 24, 2004, the *Plain Dealer* newspaper ran a front page story featuring the headline "Catholic Schools' New Model" in which the paper examined the closing of several schools this year, while focusing on the independent start-ups such as St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Hudson.  
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**Politics and Holy Communion**  
**Two recent articles in the Plain Dealer reported on politics, Church teaching, and the reception of Holy Communion**  
In the follow-up story, the Plain Dealer failed to publish Cleveland Bishop Anthony Pillas entire statement when responding to an inquiry about Colorado Springs, Colorado Bishop Michael Sheridan directive that those who do not vote in adherence to Catholic Teaching should not receive Eucharist. Here is Bishop Pillas full response:  
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**Plain Dealer Story on Diocese Finances Falls Short Through Omissions**  
On Monday, April 5, 2004, the (Cleveland) Plain Dealer newspaper ran a front page story with the headline "Catholic Diocese's Income Declines." With no apparent reason for its timing, the story attempted to paint a bleak picture of Diocesan finances and operations.  
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**Diocese Clarifies Plain Dealer story on "Reluctance to close Churches"**  
A recent front page story in the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper asserted that the Diocese of Cleveland's reluctance to close parishes is putting a strain on priests.  
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**Diocesan Director responds to Plain Dealer columns**  
Recently, the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper ran two columns critical of the Diocese and Bishop Pilla in handling sexual abuse cases.  
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## For The Record: Plain Dealer distorts Diocese revision of Sex Abuse Policy

A Friday, January 4, 2008 story in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* newspaper authored by religion reporter David Briggs offered a distorted interpretation of a suspension automatically incurred by the commission of a specific action) restricting his exercise of various ministry functions. (see Canon 1333)  
[Read this entire "For the Record" >](#)

## Plain Dealer story on Clergy Abuse cases limits diocesan response

A Saturday, May 26, 2007 article in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* newspaper reviewed the status of local clergy who have been placed on administrative leave since March of 2002. The story neglected to offer the full response by the Diocese of Cleveland to the newspapers questions concerning these matters of clergy sexual abuse. Here is the full response.

Any report revisiting what has commonly been called the clergy abuse scandal should include a discussion of the concentrated efforts and improved processes over the past five years by the Church in the Diocese of Cleveland to deal with such matters. Those efforts and processes include:  
[Enhanced Victim Outreach](#)  
Pastoral care and counseling has been provided to all victims who came forward and would accept the assistance. The Diocese has a victim assistance coordinator to reach out to those in need and to facilitate the assistance. In addition, Bishops Pilla and Lennon have met with many victims, which has been an especially effective step in the healing process.  
[Counseling Assistance Fund for Abuse Survivors](#)  
The Diocese of Cleveland also participates in the *Counseling Assistance Fund for Abuse Survivors* as established by the Catholic Dioceses of Ohio. Administered independent of the Church, the fund has provided counseling or similar mental health services to persons who were sexually abused as minors by clergy or other representatives of the Catholic Church.  
[Virtus Protecting Gods Children Program](#)  
Participation in the Virtus Protecting Gods Children program is required of clergy and all employees and volunteers in all parishes and institutions, in all eight counties in the Diocese, who may come in frequent contact with children in Diocesan activities. More than 110,000 persons have been trained to recognize potential sexual abuse, abusers and inappropriate behavior of those involved in youth activities.  
[Enhanced Reporting Procedures](#)  
The Diocese of Cleveland and the State Counseling Fund maintain separate hot-lines that enable anyone to report abuse or seek counseling. The telephone numbers for the hot-lines are available on the Diocese website. In addition, the Diocese requires mandatory reporting to civil authorities of any allegations of sexual abuse of minors.  
[Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#)  
The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and *The Essential Norms* were established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Charter and Essential Norms established protocols for responsible and transparent response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors. In March of 2007 the National Review Board released results of its audits of all dioceses in the United States. The outside, independent, professional audit showed that the Diocese of Cleveland was again found to be in complete compliance with the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Independent audits have established that the Diocese of Cleveland has been in Compliance with the Charter for four consecutive years.  
[Independent Review Board](#)  
The Diocesan Independent Review Board continues to function as the body that assesses allegations of sexual abuse of children by clergy (past and present) in accordance with *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the Essential Norms and our Diocesan Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse*. The Review Board investigates allegations, evaluates the evidence, and advises the Bishop regarding recently reported past cases of abuse, as well as, any new cases.  
[Candidates for Ministry](#)  
Candidates for ministry are screened and evaluated by appropriate medical professionals to identify psychological issues and to assess psychosexual maturity, among other characteristics.  
[Standards of Conduct for Ministry](#)  
A new Code of Conduct for ministers in the Diocese of Cleveland has been established which includes a new protocol for clerics and all in ministry to follow when they are interacting with minors.

Concerning the priests who are currently on administrative leave as the result of past allegations of sexual abuse of a minor: Fathers Russell Bannier, Raymond Bartnikowski, Gary Berthiaume, Donald Brickman, Joseph Brodnick, Joseph Labbe, Joseph Lieberth, Daniel McBride, Brendan J. McNulty, Patrick O'Connor, Anthony Rebol, Joseph Seminatore, James Viall and David Weber all remain on administrative leave as their cases have not been resolved and are under consideration by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican.

While on administrative leave, they are not permitted to wear clerical attire or exercise any public acts of priestly ministry. Consistent with Canon (Church) law, since the Diocese is required to provide a just remuneration to priests, they continue to receive salary and hospitalization until the final disposition of each priests case.

The cases of Fathers Alan Bruening, Joseph Lang and Edward Rupp have been decided by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican which has ordered that they be permanently removed from the ecclesiastical ministry. They are not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments, wear clerical attire, or publicly present themselves as priests. Each is now confined to a life of prayer and penance as established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *Essential Norms for Diocesan Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons #8b*. They receive minimal support of a pension and hospitalization.

Former priests James Mulica, George Bailey, Dennis Wirks, Thomas Luckay and William McCool had long ago resigned from the priesthood and have no association with the Diocese. Father Ronald Tomicky is retired and on total and permanent disability which completely restricts his ministry. Regarding the question of monitoring, the Diocese has no legal authority to restrict the freedom of those who are on administrative leave or those who have left the priesthood.

## News PD Story November 19, 2005

A story in the Saturday, November 19, 2005, *Plain Dealer* Arts & Life section discussed the U. S. Bishops approval of the document clarifying the preparation, and formation Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the Church. In the 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the story, the term ordination (in quotation marks) is used to describe the procedure for formally acknowledging someone as a Lay Ecclesial minister. The proper term would be authorization as it pertains to the formal identification of this ministerial role. Ordination is reserved for Priests and Deacons in the Catholic Church.

## News Plain Dealer Matrimony and Holy Orders

**For The Record**  
*Plain Dealer* Story Trivializes sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders  
Subtext: An article in the Sunday, November 13, 2005 edition of the *Plain Dealer* failed to properly portray the sanctity of the sacraments of Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders.

In the November 13<sup>th</sup> section pD0, the *Plain Dealer* entitled its story Need a priest? Web site offers list of married ones willing to help. It is difficult to determine why writer John Campanellis motivation was in producing the article, other than to say that it completely neglected the Churchs teaching and understanding of the sacrament of matrimony and the role of the priest in the sacrament. The article focused on a priest, now resigned from ministry, performing a marriage in a Unitarian Church for a woman who was raised Catholic.

The *Plain Dealer* had received a full explanation about this Rent-a-Priest concept from the Diocese of Cleveland Vicar for Clergy and Religious, the Rev. Lawrence Jurcak, but included just one quote that such a marriage was invalid in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Here is the full explanation from Fr. Jurcak:

The Church laws cited by Rent a Priest are taken out of context. While a resigned priest is validly ordained and validly celebrates Eucharist, baptizes and anoints the sick; Church law prohibits such acts aside from danger of death circumstances. Marriage and the celebration of the sacrament of Penance in ordinary circumstances require proper delegation. If the priest does not have proper delegation the actions are null and void. For Rent a Priest to represent themselves to the public as being connected with the Catholic Church would be disingenuous.

While respecting whatever reasons of conscience may have moved a priest to resign from active priestly ministry and request a dispensation from the clerical state, the priest knows that, although he remains a priest forever, once the petition is granted he loses both the obligations and the rights pertaining to his ordination. He may no longer exercise any function reserved to the ordained and he is prohibited to present himself as a priest. (see Canon 292) Having been granted a dispensation from the clerical state a resigned priest is able to validly enter into a marriage in the Catholic Church.

The law of the Church states that any priest who attempts marriage, even civilly, incurs a *latae sententiae* suspension (suspension automatically incurred by the commission of a specific action) restricting his exercise of various ministry functions. (see Canon 1333)

In the case of a person in imminent danger of death, that individual may be baptized, confirmed, absolved and anointed in the sacrament of the sick by any priest whatsoever, no matter what his canonical status.

A Mass celebrated by a resigned married priest would be a valid but illicit insofar as it is contrary to the will of the Church. A wedding performed by a resigned married priest would be invalid in the eyes of the Catholic Church because the priest would not have proper delegation.

It is wrong for a resigned married priest to portray himself as someone who is able to continue to offer the sacraments of the Catholic Church aside from danger of death circumstances. If these resigned priests are claiming that they can provide Catholic sacraments to people legitimately, that simply is not true.

Reverend Lawrence Jurcak  
Secretary and Vicar for Clergy and Religious  
Diocese of Cleveland  
November 8, 2005

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  - [News Regina Brett April 20, 2005](#)
  - [News TV19 Missing Files](#)
  - [News July 1, 2004](#)
  - [News Mullen Housing](#)
  - [News Catholic Schools Future PD Article](#)
  - [News PD Finance Story](#)
  - [News Plain Dealer Story on Diocese Finances](#)
  - [News For the Record Archives](#)
  - [News For the Record Master](#)

[«Start](#)[Prev](#)[12345678](#)[Next](#)[End»](#)