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# How the Church is responding to the call to “personal and communal conversion in Safeguarding”

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IADC

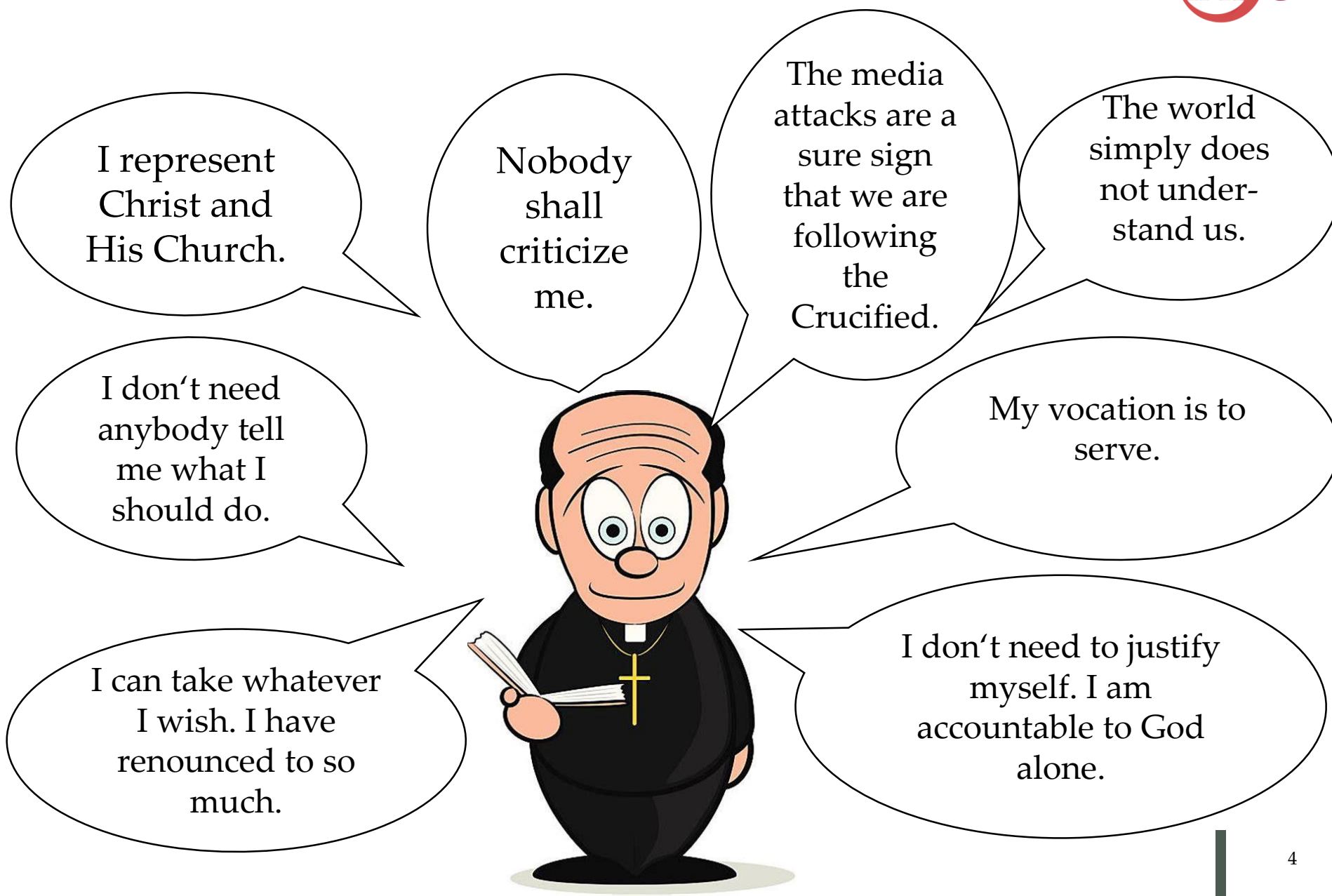
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# 1. On the spot: the Church

- Shockwaves: the “double crises”
- CIASE; Munich; Portugal; Spain
- Increasing focus on abuse of adults (seminarians, women) and abuse of religious women
- „They don’t get it“ – „How could this happen and be covered for so long?!“
- Target: Bishops, Cardinals, Pope → the untouchable become the target
- 1,4 B Catholics, 24 Churches, 5300 bishops, 2900 dioceses, ??? n. of Religious Congregations; Vatican: universal oversight – vastly understaffed; Dicasteries

## 2. Clericalist attitude



# 3. Perceptions of survivors

Never ever  
has anybody  
listened to me  
story and my  
hurt.

I don't  
know to  
whom I  
can turn to  
for  
support.

I am livid that  
they push  
away their  
responsibility.

I have  
struggled  
long  
enough, I  
give up.

If only I had  
not been so  
powerless!

I felt so dirty and  
guilty.

I had blind trust in  
Father X.  
I couldn't imagine  
that he could do  
anything evil.

If only they had the  
courage to confess  
their crimes and do  
justice to us!





# 4. Paradoxes



- In the Church at the same time
  - victims *and* perpetrators
  - prosecutors *and* superiors who cover-up
  - safeguarders *and* those who downplay, deny
- *One Church*  $\leftrightarrow$  Very little passing on of experience and expertise from one local church to other.
- Clericalism among clerics and ... non-clerics
- Power: authoritarian, role-bound  $\leftrightarrow$  diffuse, contested: lack of structure, accountability & clear rules one of the reasons for abuse & cover-up (Deetman NL)
- Danger of “ticking off” obligations = getting rid of uncomfortable area of concern
- Dealing with past = poor *versus* Safeguarding = good

## 5. Structural consequences



### → Holding together *contra* splitting:

- Norms *and* Attitudes
- Law *and* Spirituality/ Theology
- Justice *and* Mercy
- Care for Children *and* Adult Persons at risk
- Clergy *and* “Laity”
- Specialists and “Laity”
- Dioceses *and* Religious Orders
- Government/ State institutions *and* Church hierarchy

**Communion – unity in diversity: respect,  
listening, new asceticism, building bridges**

## 5. Theological & Pastoral Principles

- “When is this going to be over so we can get back to our real ministries?” →  
“*This* is our real ministry. This is what God is calling us to today – care for victims.”  
“We forgot that victims are part of our flock too.”
- Accountability; *Vos estis lux mundi*
- Co-Responsibility, not by-standers.
- What can we foster a culture of constructive debate and of transparency?
- Why do we (continue) what we do?



## 5. Spiritual Lessons



- How do we deal with our own resistances, uncomfortableness or questions (around sexuality, faith, Church leadership etc.) as well as with Safeguarding fatigue?
- Where is the space for survivors in our midst?
- What is at the centre of our attention: our institutions, our reputation (avoid scandal!) etc. or the victim, the vulnerable, the other and the Other, God?
- What do Dignity and Care mean to us and for/in our ministries?

- Global E-learning training and qualification centre for pastoral professions with multicultural and interdisciplinary issues responding to the sexual abuse of children;  
languages: French, English, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian
- Diploma and Licentiate (Master) in Safeguarding; Doctorates
- Research and conferences

# Thank you for your attention!

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