



PARISH 'LIFE' NEWS

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Bishop Robert Baker's Remarks On Recent Church Scandals

...I find it no coincidence that these reports arrived on the heels of the



50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI's encyclical, dated July 25, 1968. We know that *Humanae Vitae* addresses the regulation of birth, and the sacred-ness, dignity, and life-affirming nature of conjugal love shared within the Sacrament of Marriage. The question might arise, "How does that relate to the scandals of the day?" The answer is quite simple and something we don't hear often enough: Virtue. More specifically, and something we hear of even less: Chastity. Sadly, chastity is not a word that is highly utilized in common parlance, nor is it a concept that is highly valued or understood in our culture. Even

more sadly, it is a virtue that obviously has been too frequently lost to the powers of the world, the flesh, and the devil within the ordained ministry of our Church. This is the greatest sadness of all; and when you combine this with narcissism, pride, and abuse of power, you elicit the perfect storm that we see today. St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was no stranger to a Church that shared the similar ingredients of lust, narcissism, pride, power, and greed, as he devoted his priestly ministry, often at times of great risk to his life, to bringing some 40,000 Calvinists back to the Catholic faith post-Reformation...At the time, St. Francis de Sales uttered these prophetic words, that are as relevant today as they were during his priestly ministry, "Those who commit these types of scandals are guilty of the spiritual equivalent of murder, but I'm here among you to prevent something far worse for you. While those who give scandal are guilty of the spiritual equivalent of murder, those who take scandal—who allow scandals to destroy their faith—are guilty of spiritual suicide." This is where we all have our part in the solution. We cannot allow these scandals to destroy our faith. We, as a diocese, cannot be guilty of spiritual suicide any more than I and my brother priests can be guilty of spiritual murder. We all must turn to the Bread of Life for our sustenance. Only by turning to prayer and penance, and by living a life of sacrificial virtue, steeped in the Sacraments of the Church, does any one of us stand a chance against the great evils of our time. Please consider giving at least an hour a week of Eucharistic Adoration, or more, to pray for our Church and its clergy...

--Excerpted from a [statement](#) by Bishop Robert Baker
of the Diocese of Birmingham, AL, 8/20/18

USCCB National Conference Calls Pro-Life Leaders to Be Missionary Disciples

More than 100 diocesan, state and national pro-life leaders gathered in Phoenix, AZ, for the annual Diocesan Pro-Life Leadership Conference to discuss how best to build a culture of life...The theme of the July 29-Aug. 1 conference, "Missionary Disciples Building a Culture of Life," pointed to the reality of each person being created in the image and likeness of God and that in baptism, each Christian is called to be both a missionary and a disciple...The reinstatement of the death penalty in some states was just one of a host of life-related issues the pro-life leaders came together to discuss. Abortion, physician-assisted suicide, contraception and pornography all figured into the sessions, but the entire undertaking was seen through a spiritual lens... The conference opened with a Mass celebrated by Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted who in his homily said the failure to teach the truth of marriage has caused us to "become lukewarm in our faith, and our lives and our society suffer from the poisonous consequences of lies." He said the 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, Blessed Paul VI's encyclical, could be seen as "a mustard seed that Jesus is planting afresh for this present generation" so that the truth about human life could be planted in the cultural soil of our time. The national conference featured the People of Life awards, bestowed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Secretariat for Pro-life Activities on Catholics who have answered the call outlined by Pope St. John Paul II in *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)*. The winners have demonstrated a lifetime of devotion to the pro-life cause and the promotion of the culture of life

[The Catholic Sun](#), 8/11/18

Francis Revises Catechism to Say Death Penalty is 'inadmissible'

The catechism's paragraph 2267 on capital punishment had previously been updated by Pope St. John Paul II in 1997 to strengthen its skepticism about the need to use the death penalty in the modern world and, particularly, to affirm the importance of protecting all human life. Now the catechism will read: "Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good. Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption." Pope Francis' change to the text concludes: "Consequently, the church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,' and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide." Announcing the change Aug. 2, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said, "The new text, following in the footsteps of the teaching of John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae*, affirms that ending the life of a criminal as punishment for a crime is inadmissible because it attacks the dignity of the person, a dignity that is not lost even after having committed the most serious crimes."

[The Pilot](#), 8/10/18

Lawsuit Challenges Sewickly Order to End Bible Studies on Private Property

Sewickley Heights Borough, fifteen miles west of Pittsburgh, is now ordering Scott and Terri Fetterolf to stop using their 35-acre property to host Bible studies, worship events, religious retreats, or religious fundraisers, something they and the prior owner have done for decades. Borough officials filed a Notice of Violation/Cease and Desist Order and seek to impose zoning restrictions such as those applicable to "Places of Worship" like churches and synagogues on the Fetterolfs' activities. However, secular counterparts to these activities like parties, political fundraisers, and book clubs are not banned. The Independence Law Center filed *Fetterolf v. Borough of Sewickley Heights* in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. The case raises claims involving religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and equal protection. [Independence Law Center](#) is a Pennsylvania-based pro-bono legal organization dedicated to advancing civil rights.

[PAFamily.org](#), 7/18/18

Network of Homes Provides Love, Hope, Help for Pregnant Women in Need

When Chris Bell was working in Times Square in the late 1970s, he was shocked repeatedly to see young mothers entering crisis shelters with their children, and he decided that he had to do something. With the help of Father Benedict Groeschel, a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and his spiritual director at the time, Bell founded Good Counsel, a network of pro-life maternity homes. Currently, Good Counsel operates six homes -- four in New York state, one in New Jersey and one in Alabama -- and works with other homes all over the country. It also is looking to both grow and expand its network. "Good Counsel is one of the founding members of the National Maternity Housing Coalition," Bell told Catholic News Service. "Most of the homes are small and limited in what they can do, but we can help find a place for any pregnant woman in the country." Bell said that any pregnant women can enter the maternity homes at no charge, and the homes will help provide them with opportunities to go back to school and find jobs. Good Counsel will even assist pregnant women with drug addictions or mental illnesses and help find suitable places for them. They also can help plan adoptions. Bell said that many women don't realize that they can choose the couple who would adopt their child and fear that the child will be placed in the foster care system. Bell said that many women who are told that their child will have genetic defects can benefit from maternity homes.

[The Pilot](#), 8/15/18

Novel about Family of Jesus Wins Award

My Brother's Keeper, a novel about the family of Jesus, by Michigan author Bill Kassel, has received the 2018 Catholic Arts & Letters Award — known as the "Lily" — from the Catholic Writers Guild. The award was announced Wednesday, August 1, at the Catholic Marketing Network Trade Show, held in Lancaster, PA. It was this year's choice in the Adult Fiction category. An epic historical/religious novel in three parts, *My Brother's Keeper* draws both on the Bible and on ancient non-canonical writings and Church traditions to provide a retelling of the Christian story that is imaginative and unconventional. The plot focuses on James, a principal figure in the early Christian community of Jerusalem who played a crucial role in the first council of the Church, and whom the Bible identifies as "the brother of the Lord." Kassel noted that being honored by the Catholic Writers Guild is especially meaningful to him. "Bringing this work to public awareness has been a challenge," he said. "So I want to express my sincerest gratitude for the recognition afforded by the 'Lily' Award, given by my brother and sister Catholic writers." The book is distributed by the Sycamore, Illinois-based Saint Joseph Communications.

[Christian Newswire](#), 8/15/18