

Child Sexual Abuse

Survival & Thriving

Teresa

Teresa Pitt Green (pseudonym)

Survivor of abuse

Diocese of Arlington, Virginia

Impact

- Survivors
- USCCB OCYP Staff
- Review Boards
- Advisory Boards
- Offices of Child Protection
- Victim Assistance Coordinators
- Lay ministers
- Catholics in society and media
- Priests, Deacons, Sisters, Religious
- Bishops

Today

- Abuse as Betrayal
- Aftermath & Pitfalls
- Unlikely Healing Process
- Encountering Diocesan Outreach

Betrayal

As if a million years ago in another time and place, I was a child, and, as a child, I was abused at any time and everywhere.... There was no safe zone.

(from Restoring Sanctuary)

Aftermath

- Surrender as annihilation
- Forgiveness as enabling
- Caring as danger
- Words as lies
- Boundaries as illusion
- Sacraments as human power
- Growing up as flight
- Achievement as meaningless

Pitfalls

- Drugs
- Drinking
- Self Abuse
- Abusive Relationships
- Isolation
- Mental Illness
- Physical Impact

#FeelingNado

- Shame
- Grief
- Anger, rage
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Incredulity ←

Triggers

- Roman collar
- Crucifix
- Inside church
- Outside church
- Stations of the Cross
- Rosary
- Incense
- Sound of echo/stone
- Sung Latin Mass
- Altar boys
- Music from Mass
- Statues
- Religious Christmas decorations
- Votive candles
- Old-style pulpit
- Older architecture
- Newer architecture
- Drawer closing in sanctuary
- Heels on church floor
- Triduum services
- Baptism services
- News pieces on Church
- Holy medal/scapular
- Children in uniforms
- Ecclesiastic dress
- Gregorian chanting
- Confessional
- Church parking lots
- Weddings
- Funerals
- Closed doors

Shenanigans St. Michael McGee

Ne'er Do Well

Hapless Sloth

Plays on Emotions

Possible Anarchist

Parasite on National GDP

Barks, Growls, Noisy

Irrepressible

Sometimes embarrassing



Beginning

- Someone believed me.
- My life force was greater than my death wish.
- Authorities were wrong to dismiss my truth.
- This was not a sin I could confess.

Survivor Truths

#247 - We are not what happened to us.

#856 - We are not our illnesses.

Therapy

- Integration
- Commonalities
- Being heard
- Compassion
- Tools
- Wellness

Arlington, VA

- Companionship
- Prayer services
- Healing Masses
- Retreats
- Discussion evenings
- Survivor advisory group
- Speaking/writing
- Spiritual directors
- A bunch of other stuff

Wounded Healers

- We all carry our own sins. Some of us carry the sins of others.
- Sometimes I have to choose between light and darkness many times every minute.

Catholics Listening

- Deacon training
- Priest training
- Therapists
- Advisory Board
- Review Board
- Diocesan Councils

Things Not To Say or Do

- “Forgive and forget.”
- “Just move on with your life.”
- “Get over it.”
- Don’t try to fix it.
- Don’t try to manage it.
- Don’t try to own it.
- No great big hug
- VAC as Litigator

Things to Say or Do

- It was not your fault.
- Jesus loves you.
- Depersonalize this person's struggle.
- You are not the healing force.
- Have enough faith to stay out of the way.

Expectations

- Make peace and move on, or ...
- Mixed but fuller relationship
- Restoring a relationship with God

- Super delayed impact
- Ripples into families, communities

Tools

- Veronica's Cloth
Spiritual Companions in Surviving Abuse
Lewis S. Fiorelli, OSFS, and T. Pitt Green
- Restoring Sanctuary
T. Pitt Green

Healing?

Resurrected Wounds

- Not restoration to “normal”
- Nothing lost can be returned.
- Nothing wounded can be the same.

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