Forum: Crisis in the Church. A Double Crisis of Faith and Leadership

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A DOUBLE CRISIS OF FAITH AND LEADERSHIP

Diana L. Hayes

The Catholic Church in the US and around the world is today struggling with a crisis that strikes at the very heart of what we, as the People of God, think not only of our Church but also of our Christian faith itself. The crisis caused by the unfolding and deepening of the sexual abuse scandal among priests and religious has in part been made even more difficult because of the seeming inability of our leaders, bishops and others, to confront openly and honestly the impact that this scandal has had and continues to have on the Church and the faithful. We are thus confronted not only by a crisis of faith but also by a crisis of leadership.

Although the impact spreads throughout the Church, those especially affected are young Catholics, those found in our many Catholic colleges and universities, who are still struggling to shape and strengthen their faith in the face of countless shocks from the increasingly secular world. Having to deal with further shocks from within the Church itself leaves many of them teetering on the edge of an abyss. What can and should we do who teach and serve in administrative roles at Jesuit colleges and universities to help them bridge this abyss with a strong and unshakable faith that leads them over the abyss into the arms of Jesus rather than a shaky and unformed faith that allows them to fall?

In keeping with their mission as institutions of higher learning, Jesuit colleges and universities must ensure that their students are not only introduced to the rich tradition of social justice teachings that have historically placed the Roman Catholic Church in the forefront as a critical voice over against the growing secularization of society with its accompanying hedo-

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