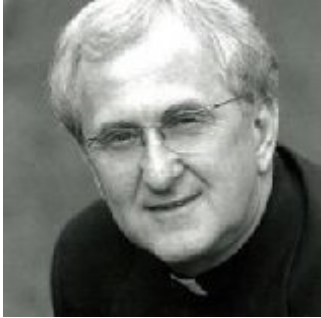


REVEREND DONALD B. COZZENS

Priest of Integrity 2009 - Voice of the Faithful



Reverend Donald B. Cozzens has been a steadfast supporter of the mission and goals of VOTF since its earliest days. He is a priest who challenges the status quo with wit, wisdom and unflinching honesty. He encourages priests and laypersons alike to be persons of integrity: to speak the truth, to be a voice for the voiceless, to right the wrongs that have been done, to both challenge and encourage one another, and to do so with compassion and kindness.

By the time the scandal of abuse and cover up surfaced in Boston, he had already written books on the crisis in the priesthood. His *Changing Face of the Priesthood* (published in 2000) and *The Spirituality of the Diocesan Priest* (1997) named the critical issues that impact on priests today.

Those who know Father Cozzens well know him as a gentle and kind person, and one who, by the very fact that he is being honored in this way, would deflect the attention and plead unworthiness. Yet this soft spoken man speaks and writes with courageous candor about the dangers of clericalism, the importance of integrity, and the inability of a hierarchical system that is feudal in its structure to meet the needs of people today. It is within this system that the abuse and its cover up have occurred.

Father Cozzens' credibility is based, among other things, on his experience as Vicar for Clergy in the Diocese of Cleveland. During the six years he served in that capacity, he came face-to-face with the ugliness of sexual abuse. He sat across a desk and listened to either a victim or a priest-abuser and felt a great sadness. It was often his place to inform a parish that a priest had been reported for misconduct and would be leaving. The stunned silence and shocked disbelief on the people's faces are logged firmly in his memory. Even more painful were his visits to the homes of victims.

Father Cozzens' books continue to articulate what has been left unspoken. He names crucial concerns in books such as *Sacred Silence - Denial and the Crisis in the Church, Faith That Dares to Speak* and *Freeing Celibacy*. He is a writer in residence at John Carroll University in Cleveland where he teaches in the religious studies department. In addition, he lectures widely and leads retreats for priests. In prior years he served as president-rector of St. Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Cleveland. He has appeared on television programs in the US and on the BBC.

We honor our brother in faith, Father Donald Cozzens, for being a model of ecclesial loyalty and personal integrity—authentic in words and actions and an inspiration to priests and laity alike to “bravely yet humbly dare to think.”

When asked for a comment on our coming together on Long Island, he said,

“The voice of the faithful is the hope of the church.”

(All books published by The Liturgical Press)

Priest of Integrity Award



Voice of the Faithful

Proudly and gratefully honors

Reverend Donald B. Cozzens

For his fearless reflection on the Crises in the Church and in the Priesthood

His detailed expose of the Clerical Culture of Silence and Denial

His unflagging support of Justice for Victims and Priests

His conviction that Voice of the Faithful is the Hope of the Church

CONFERENCE 2009

October 31, 2009 Melville, New York