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The media issue a scathing, well-documented look at how much money US Catholic dioceses raked in under Trump's pandemic relief initiative, and watch the response in Catholic circles, Catholic media, among many Catholic laity. /1

It's a variant of the VERY SAME response used repeatedly by Catholic leaders to exonerate top-level responsibility for priests abusing minors and going unpunished.

The typical gambit now being used to justify the lavish feeding at the Trump trough: /2

Well, maybe dioceses were grabby and did not need all that money — look at the assets they're sitting on already — but poor, struggling parishes needed that money.

As if a parish is somehow disconnected from a diocese …. As if a parish is not integrally tied to a diocese. /3

As I say, this is a variant of the argument often advanced by Catholic leaders to justify doing nothing when a priest is known to be abusing minors: Well, he's only a hired employee on a contract. What does he have to do with us, with the bishop, with the chancellor? /4

The whole Catholic governing system is set up in a way that totally integrates parishes with dioceses. No parish and no parish priest can possibly function with independence from diocesan structures. Let a parish/parish priest try that, and see how quick the reprisal is. /5

But now we're being told by defensive Catholic apologists who want us to stop seeing the damning evidence of that media report about how much money dioceses raked in under Trump's program that while dioceses may have been greedy, parishes, poor little things, were needy. /6

They did good things with the money.

While the dioceses of which they are an integral part were raking in huge sums as they sat on huge assets: in what sense is any parish needy, given these facts? /7

These are peculiar arguments, are they not, for an institution whose ecclesiology is deeply corporatist: We're one body, the body of Christ. The hand cannot work independently from the foot or the heart…. /8

Except when it suddenly becomes expedient to pretend we're not one body at all, that a parish somehow functions independently of a diocese and that the diocese, with its abundant assets, cannot assist a parish in financial need…. /9

As if greed at the diocesan level says nothing at all about the rest of the Catholic structure — and as if lay Catholics and their parishes are in no way implicated in greed at the diocesan level, or cover-up of priests' abuse at the diocesan level…. /10

You know what it behooves Catholics to do if they want a better, less corrupt, more authentic church?

Face the truth for a change. Tell the truth for a change. Stop letting Catholic media play both-sides games with the truth for a change. If you really *want* a better church./11