

Incubating the Culture of Corruption

The Catholic Church and Political Corruption in El Paso Texas

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Introduction

Corruption in a community can only flourish when the society not only allows it to grow but encourages it as well. Deep-rooted corruption, like the one found in El Paso, must be ingrained into the fabric of society. In order to do that, the moral compass of the society must accept that corruption is an acceptable standard for the community. A community's moral compass is defined through education and encouragement. Encouragement is demonstrated every time a pillar of the community, like Bob Jones or Dana Pittard, are lauded by the business community and political elites. On the other hand, educating corruption takes many forms, from allowing corrupt behavior in educational settings, such as the school districts, or by ignoring corruption within the policing agencies as well as governmental circles.

In El Paso, the subject most talked about around watering holes and water coolers is corruption in its many forms. Everyone talks about how everything is corrupt, from doing business with government entities to employers stealing peoples' wages. It is talked about but largely shrugged off as part of life in El Paso.

I have written numerous blog posts showing you the many corrupt practices within the community. Some have been prosecuted while others are swept under the rug. There are so many examples in all levels of government and within the business community that it has led me to ask a simple question – *how are the corrupt practices engrained into the psyche of the city.*

El Paso is not the only community with corruption as part of its society. Corruption is the most basic moral deficiency in any society. No community is immune from it. As I have written numerous times before, corruption is not only defined as a criminal act but it can also be an action that may not be criminal but also it is morally wrong, nonetheless. A poignant example of this are the individuals that use their neighbor's WiFi for free. It is not precisely illegal but it is wrong nonetheless. It is a version of corruption.

Corruption can encompass many forms. It can be obviously illegal like being paid to issue a government contract to a preferred vendor. It can be as simple as accepting a paycheck while avoiding a full day of work by abusing sick leave or just taking long coffee and smoke breaks. It can also be sanctioned by the government by giving preferential treatment to vendors under government programs such as the 8A contracting system knowing that the process is being abused by companies that by any common sense measure are not small business concerns.

Corruption is a complex process that is detrimental to the society because it feeds upon itself in order to perpetuate itself throughout the society. Corruption breeds corruption.

As humans, we are naturally corrupt. We look for ways to take advantage of our neighbors. We seldom share and we very rarely do the right thing unless we are afraid of the consequences. That is why our moral compasses need to be set through education. Naturally, the standard is set by the parents. However, as parenting evolves and certain things become more acceptable the standard is lowered.

In many instances, religion sets the moral compass of a society. In the case of El Paso, it is the Catholic Church that has a significant influence over the community. The Catholic Church, along with other religions, is supposed to be the moral compass of the community. For most residents of El Paso, the Catholic Faith is the moral compass for their lives.

Although education is pushed as *a teach by repetition model*, the true lessons are learned from the *teach by example model*. A teacher can teach by forcing a student to read the curriculum, however most students learn by following examples. This is particularly true when it comes to society's moral compass.

When a police officer ignores a traffic light, the driver following the squad car learns that traffic lights can be ignored because of the "if he can do it, I can do it as well" mentality.

As the largest source of moral compass education in the city, it is important that we take a close look at the example that the Catholic Church teaches through its actions. It has been my contention that corruption in El Paso is encouraged because those in position to teach by example partake of the corruption themselves, thus making it an acceptable standard of society.

Because of this, the culture of corruption is ingrained within El Paso.

Corruption is such a complex issue that I could spend years writing books upon books covering the topic and never really cover all aspects of it. In this essay, I am going to focus on a very miniscule component of the culture of corruption in the city, the Catholic Church.

I have chosen to focus on the Catholic Church's El Paso Diocese through this essay, not as an indictment of the religion or its practitioners, but as a microcosm of a much larger problem. A religion is defined not by its followers but by its leadership. Please keep this in mind as I lay out my thesis. Keep in mind that it is not my intent to denigrate a religion but to point out its failures so that they may be understood by its followers. Corrective measure leads to healing and understanding that corrupt practices must be eradicated by example and not by chastisement.

Strap in, it is going to be difficult to read but important to understand. To fix a problem the truth needs to be exposed and the truth is sometimes painful.

The Catholic Church and Corruption in El Paso

Anyone that has studied any amount of history understands that the Catholic Church has stumbled historically in many instances when it comes to proclaiming the Word of God. Many times egregious and deadly events have been ignited by the false belief in a misguided doctrine. God is infallible but people are the ones that corruptly take God's words and make them their own.

The Catholic Church may argue that it represents the will of God but it is the people that lead the Church that sets the moral compass of the Church and thus of its followers. There has been much commentary

about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church that many of you understand that it has been a problem for the Church for a significant amount of time.

Sexual abuse in the Church has been an ongoing issue in El Paso, like in other communities. The Catholic Church has been accused of covering up for abusive priests and in some instances; it has acknowledged this as a fact.

On February 5, 2015, the Catholic Diocese of El Paso settled a lawsuit involving Alfonso Madrid who was accused of molesting two children in the 1970s. Not only is this latest settlement an example of an ongoing problem but you should notice that it took about 40 years for the issue to be dealt with by the court system. The length of time is another symptom of corruption.

It took this long to reach a resolution for many reasons. Among them includes a judiciary that does not look to offer equity in a problem but it instead creates barriers that corruptors have become adept at using to keep from having to admit their wrongdoing.

Some of the attorneys reading my blog sometimes get upset with me every time I point out that the legal system is a significant reason that corruption exists. Look no further than when Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, the highest judiciary in the state, publicly told Texas County Clerks that they could defy the US Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriages. Yes, I understand the argument of state's rights; *but what kind of judiciary allows a subordinate to advocate ignoring the higher court's ruling?*

It is all a nasty game of selective enforcement. If I advocate an armed rebellion on my blog by El Paso taxpayers fed up with high taxes, I would surely be investigated and probably charged with a crime. Yet, the same system that would have me arrested allows one of its members to advocate breaking the law and not be investigated for that action, much less be charged with a crime. Keep in mind that Paxton acknowledged that clerks might be arrested and even offered to help them defend themselves in court. That type of advocating is defying the same judiciary that he is supposed to be upholding. That is corrupt and the judiciary that is supposed to be the arbiter of what is wrong or good is the one showing, by example, that corruption is acceptable.

Those that argue that corruption will be rooted out as soon as the authorities become aware of it fundamentally ignore that the legal system roots out corruption on a selective basis. That is another problem about corruption - in that it is a self-perpetuating activity that is constantly feeding itself throughout society.

Catholic Church Cover Ups in El Paso

El Paso Bishop Metzger "thundered that Mike and his mother 'were going to hell if anything I told him was not absolutely truthful.' Metzger, a narcissist (see pp. 340ff.), made himself out to be the real victim by telling Mike that his own mother had just died and 'wasn't I ashamed to assert these things at his time of sadness," recalled Mike. [2, page 30] (The footnotes will be in the last installment)

I had to reread those words multiple times, as each time I read them I could not believe they were true. A child goes to his mother to tell her about a horrific event in his life. The mother does what she is supposed to do by going to the proper authority to report an allegation and ask for an investigation. Put

yourself in that child's shoes for a moment and ask yourself, how much courage it must have taken to go to his mother to tell her he had been abused.

Now put yourself in the mother's shoes and ask yourself, how much love she had for her child that she took him at his word and attempted to report the abuse to the proper authority even though she might have been incredulous that the individual that she believed in could not possibly have been this evil.

Instead of the proper response of taking the allegation seriously and investigating it, the Bishop of El Paso intimidated both the child and the mother with threats of hell and when that did not work complained that they should not have brought this to his attention because he was dealing with personal problems of his own. The pastor basically sent the sheep away to be slaughtered by an indifferent Church.

In 1942, Sydney Mathew Metzger was appointed the second bishop of El Paso. [2]

"Mike" is the pseudonym for a sexual abuse victim that was eleven years old when the abuse started. Three priests were involved in the abuse of "Mike," in addition to Metzger's abusively denigrating him and trying to misdirect the abuse away from the priests towards him. I am not going to go into the full details for brevity sake but it is important to note that the three priests involved had a reputation for abuse before landing in El Paso and at least one was a close friend of Sydney Metzger.

This was not a case of he said, she said as all of the priests had a documented history of sexually abusing children, albeit much of it covered up by the Church before arriving in El Paso. I do not go into detail but rest assured that it is not an allegation but a documented case of abuse by three men that under the guise of doing God's work preyed upon a child that was entrusted to them by a mother looking for God's grace for her child.

A First Person Account

A blog reader confided to me that he had witnessed an incident that deeply troubled him while he was attending Cathedral High School in the early 1960's. As the reader recounted, he was on his morning newspaper delivery run on a Saturday morning when he delivered a paper to a motel's office. As "I stepped out of the office I saw a Cathedral brother [*teacher*] leave a room and get into his car...minutes later I saw a senior (I was a junior then) leave the same room." [1] The individual related to me that the following Wednesday, the teacher he saw leave the motel room "cornered" him at the dirt school parking lot and "threatened" to have him expelled if he ever told anyone about what he had witnessed. [1]

According to the anonymous source, each time he brought up the incident with fellow students years after graduating, the others would feign ignorance, even accusing him of being one of the abused victims. "It's a sour subject no one wants to admit, especially since many are doctors, lawyers, politicians, [and] teachers."

According to what the anonymous source shared with me, it was not a matter of abusers openly approaching their victims. It was not a case of every student being approached by the abusers. Instead, according to the source, certain students seemed to have been picked out for reasons unknown to the

relator. The source has told me that he has suffered as a result of him trying to expose what he witnessed. He has been ostracized.

Ostracizing or deflecting attention away from the issue at hand by alleging wrong doing by the messenger is a classic example of a corrupt society that wants to keep the corruption in place. Not all cries of illegality are valid as wrongfully alleging criminality, is in itself, corrupt. However, when the knee jerk reaction is to dismiss a whistleblower as “crazy,” as having an ulterior motive or just pretending it does not exist shows that corruption is rampant.

Both the case of the anonymous source and “Mike” in the book, Sacrilege: Sexual abuse in the Catholic Church have many common elements that show how corruption manifests through many forms.

Obviously, the cover-up is the most important element as without the cover-up there would be no corruption.

To keep the cover-up intact it is important for the corruptors to silence those trying to expose the corruption. I have already shown you that ostracizing is the most common method used. The person trying to expose a problem is often pigeonholed as a troublemaker, or one of those “crazies” that corruptors encourage you to ignore.

When the accuser refuses to be silent, several methods of intimidation are brought to bear including deflecting attention away from the crime towards the failures in the accuser’s own life, either perceived or actual problems in their past.

Almost every time the accuser is confronted by authority figures who use intimidation to force the accuser into being silent, it clearly shows that they are not after exposing the corruption but rather covering it up. Sydney Metzger used his position of authority, being Bishop, to intimidate “Mike” and his mother into silence rather than listening to their concerns and investigating the veracity of it. Metzger was not interested in rooting out evil; instead, he wanted to keep the corruption in place.

My anonymous source was first intimidated by the abuser into silence with the threat of being thrown out of school and then by fellow students who refused to acknowledge the problem existed. Many of those individuals are adults now and by their actions are teaching their children and their grandchildren that it is best to ignore the corruption rather than to deal with it head on. Imagine if those individuals are government officials, teachers or law enforcement. How likely is corruption to be investigated by individuals who find no problems ignoring the abuse of children in their midst?

Some of you are probably thinking to yourselves, these things happened in the 60’s; surely, it is not happening now.

I do not know if it is happening today or not, remember that the El Paso Diocese just recently settled a case from the 1950’s. Remember that it was not until 2011 that Jerry Sandusky was exposed for abuse that started in the 70’s, even though there were many outcries that were ignored.

How do you know that there are no more cases of abuse that have yet to be acknowledged? How do you know that there is no more abuse in the schools? Can you really trust a system or a process that has been proven to historically cover-up the most heinous of abuses?

What is important to remember is that accusers are often stigmatized and silenced through being ostracized, portrayed as being “crazy,” tied to criminality or all of the above. Accusers and their families are stigmatized and marginalized because the corruptors do not want to be exposed.

Former Cathedral High School Principal Samuel Martinez (1976-1985) forced the Diocese of El Paso to settle for \$1.6 million in 2012 after Martinez was accused of molesting “numerous” boys. As you can see, this is not 60’s or 70’s but well into the 80’s. It was not until 2012 when the truth finally came out. How many victims did the Diocese ostracize in the 70s and 80s when they tried to expose Martinez?

Cases of abuse did not end in the 60s or 70s. The case of Philip Briganti is the perfect example of how authority figures cover up corruption in their midst.

The Philip Briganti Case

The November 21, 2011 memorandum by the Mendham Borough Police Department gets right to the point. It reads, “Father Briganti was the victim in this case. Our investigation found that all the communications were between the adult victim and the adult suspect. We found no evidence of inappropriate behavior involving juveniles.” [3]

This piece of paper is important to keep in mind, as it becomes the basis for ostracizing a whistleblower trying to bring attention to an important community issue.

In February of 2014, Philip Briganti was charged with “criminal sexual contact” in Paterson New Jersey. At the time the charges were announced, Briganti was a priest working at St. Joseph’s Parish at Fort Bliss. According to a KTSM report on February 21, 2014 by Adrienne Alvarez, Briganti was living in El Paso when the charges were made public.

On February 26, 2014, the El Paso Times published a letter to the editor by Sandra Villaseñor where she wrote that she had “presented proof” to Armando Ochoa, then El Paso Catholic Diocese Bishop, that they had a “sexual predator” at the local church.

Villaseñor wrote in her letter to the editor that she “was ignored, shunned” and threatened with a one million dollar lawsuit for trying to expose Briganti.

In a letter dated November 27, 2011, Robert McEnroe, a member of the St. Raphael’s Men’s Association, wrote to Sandra Villaseñor that her “actions could be considered libel and result in legal actions with severe social and financial consequences.” McEnroe adds; “Unless you have very ‘deep pockets’ or two (2) million dollar [sic] ‘ALL Peril’ umbrella insurance policy I say again: DROP THIS MATTER.”

Let me point you the most troubling aspect of McEnroe’s response to Villaseñor. Notice the line where McEnroe wrote “severe social and financial consequences?”

Normally a civil disagreement includes threats of lawsuits and sometimes may even include threats of personal harm but this is the first time I see a written threat that includes a threat of “social” consequence.

As I have been pointing out, those that attempt to shed the light on corruption are ostracized by those trying to keep the corruption hidden from the public.

Sandra Villaseñor had been trying to bring attention to Philip Briganti's previous issues with sexual abuse. Instead of taking Villaseñor's material to investigate the serious allegations against Briganti, the El Paso Diocese responded by threatening to ostracize Villaseñor.

There is no other way to read the "social" consequences comment especially for a Catholic parishioner where communion with other parishioners is important not only for the individual but for Villaseñor's family as well.

The Church was threatening to separate her from her important social connections should she persist in trying to bring the matter to the attention of the authorities.

As a matter of fact, conspirators' levee volleys to remind the whistleblower of the power they have over them.

About two weeks after Villaseñor had her letter to the editor printed in the local newspaper reminding everyone that years earlier, she had presented information to Diocese officials, another letter was published in the paper.

On March 16, 2014, Dennis Devine had the El Paso Times publish a letter to the editor he wrote. In that letter, Devine wrote that he was "appalled" when he read Villaseñor's February 26, 2015 letter. Devine added that he had found Briganti to be "a warm, caring and compassionate man." He closed the letter to the newspaper by writing "I will always consider Father Phil a priestly man."

Demonizing the messenger is the most obvious form of silencing those that try to shine light on corruption.

But what about the police department's memorandum stating that Briganti was the victim rather than the accused?

Apparently, the information that Sandra Villaseñor was providing to the church officials was about a 2005 incident in New Jersey in which Philip Briganti was involved. Anyone producing the police department's memorandum can rightfully proclaim that in that incident Briganti was the victim and the incident did not involve minors.

On its face, the memorandum discredits anything Villaseñor may want to expose if you ignore the context of the incident.

This is another tool used by corruptors producing "official" documents that create incomplete official records to discredit the whistleblower.

The case in question involved Philip Briganti receiving "harassing e-mails." On the surface, it seems to be a clear case of Briganti being blackmailed into paying an unknown sum of money in order to keep "nude photos" of him from being disseminated to church officials.

According to the police investigation, the blackmailer was a previous friend of Philip Briganti. Briganti, a Catholic priest, admitted to the police detective that he had sent three pictures of himself to the blackmailer previously. One of the pictures was of Philip Briganti “in his pajamas from the stomach down with his pajamas pulled down and his genitalia exposed.” The report adds that “several pictures of naked male adults” were found on a church computer routinely used by Briganti. [4, Supplemental Investigative Report 2005/02786 dated February 25, 2005 (*erroneously dated 2004*) by Lt. Taylor] Another report added that “pictures of naked adult males” were also found on Briganti’s laptop.

Let that digest for a moment. A public record establishes that a priest sent nude pictures of himself to another individual and that he has nude pictures on his computer and the response from the Diocese of El Paso is to ostracize the person questioning whether Philip Briganti should be conducting church services.

Having adult nude pictures on his computer may not be illegal but it is morally repugnant under Church doctrine, yet the response by Church officials is not to deal with the facts but to cover up the corruption. That is the clear message the Church sent its flock not only in the cover up but also by knowingly allowing Briganti to “teach” morality to parishioners.

Philip Briganti was charged on February 21, 2014 with criminal sexual contact in New Jersey.

Ostracizing Michael Rodriguez

It started out as a case of two men kissing at the Chico’s Tacos restaurant on June 29, 2009 that mushroomed into a citywide debate about gay rights. By the time the dust had settled, the mayor and two city representatives were facing a recall that was settled by the intervention of the courts. Intermixed in the highly charged debates and recriminations, that included questions about police training, the rights of restaurants to refuse service, religious organizations arguing religious doctrine in government and not to mention gay rights, was a Catholic Priest named Michael Rodriguez.

No matter your position on the gay-rights issue or whether a Catholic Priest should have the right, under Church protocols to perform that Latin Mass, what I want us to focus on is the process that the Diocese of El Paso has undertaken with Michael Rodriguez. Remember, part of corruption is to deflect away from the central issue into a debate about civic rights that has nothing to do with a priest versus Church authority.

Let us focus on the process the Church has undertaken to silence a priest.

There is no doubt that Michael Rodriguez became vocally involved in the debate about gay rights that was raging in El Paso after the Chico’s incident. Whether he violated Church doctrine or authority is something that only the Church faithful and the Church authority can answer.

Michael Rodriguez wrote various editorials about homosexuality that were published in the El Paso Times in 2011. He professed a position against the gay lifestyle.

According to a newspaper report on September 1, 2011, the Diocese of El Paso’s vicar general and moderator of the curia for the diocese, Anthony C. Celinio, argued that Rodriguez’ writings were Rodriguez’ “personal views and opinions.” Although the Diocese did not specifically discount the

writings as being against Church Doctrine, it took the position that the Diocese “is not taking and cannot take a side in the recall effort,” he was referring to the recall of Susie Byrd, John Cook and Steve Ortega.

On September 29, 2011, Michael Rodriguez was removed as the administrator of San Juan Bautista Catholic Church and reassigned to a parish in Presidio, Texas. Rodriguez had been at San Juan for about nine years. According to an El Paso Times article by Aaron Bracamontes, who quoted Armando X. Ochoa, the Bishop of the El Paso Diocese, as stating that Rodriguez’ reassignment was the result of “getting personally involved” in the recall.

On January 14, 2012, the El Paso Times reported that Armando X. Ochoa had filed a civil lawsuit against Michael Rodriguez. Ochoa, who was formally the Bishop of the El Paso Diocese, alleged in the lawsuit that Michael Rodriguez had not accounted for \$27,000 in Church funds. The newspaper article by Marty Schladen dated January 14, 2012, pointed out that the El Paso Diocese had removed Rodriguez because of his involvement with the recall effort but that the lawsuit contradicted that initial announcement. Instead, according to the newspaper, the removal was the result of an attempt that church officials may “have tried to conceal” that a priest had “allegedly misused parish money.” Instead of Rodriguez being removed for becoming involved in the recall effort, as originally explained by the Diocese, the Diocese now claimed through the newspaper that the removal was “because of financial discrepancies.”

Did you notice how the Diocese had changed the reasons for the removal? If you keep reading the newspaper account, you will also notice that the Diocese admits not asking the police to investigate the theft they were alleging even though they had taken the unusual step of filing a civil lawsuit, outside of the Church’s protocol.

The thing about using lies to cover up corruption is that the truth invariably eventually surfaces; however, before it does the original lie must be changed as new developments arise. A lie cannot stand on itself and it must be molded as it is challenged.

Was the alleged theft the truth, or is there more to the story?

So far Rodriguez’ removal has evolved from his involvement in the recall effort to allegations of theft and the Diocese working outside of its own processes yet not fully involving the proper officials such as the police department to investigate. Why is that?

On January 12, 2012, Michael Rodriguez responded to the lawsuit with a press release. In his press release, Rodriguez denied misusing church funds and adds that it is his belief that the real reason for Ochoa filing the lawsuit was because of Rodriguez’ “defense of the Catholic Church’s teachings with regard to homosexuality” as well as his “adherence to the Roman Liturgy of 1962.”

Both the Diocese and Rodriguez agree that Rodriguez had turned over to the Diocese approximately \$200,000 in church funds. The point of contention is \$27,000.

On January 27, 2012, five members of the San Juan Bautista Parish file as interveners in the Ochoa vs. Rodriguez lawsuit. The parishioners sued Ochoa and Arturo Bañuelos by intervening in the lawsuit that they had filed against Rodriguez.

In the lawsuit the parishioners allege that starting in 2007 they and other parishioners started making “restricted pledges” to the church to build an altar for the “Usus Antiquior of the Roman Rite” mass, or

the traditional service where the priest faced the altar as opposed to today's version where the priest faces the parishioners. The parishioners argued in their lawsuit that the monies donated "were restricted" to the altar modification and could "not be used for any other purpose."

In the lawsuit, the parishioners contended that they made \$46,090 in restricted donations. They added that on "September 24, 2011, MOST REVEREND ARMANDO X. OCHOA and MSGR ARTURO J BAÑUELAS demanded and received the sum of \$238,575.97 from FR. MICHAEL E. RODRIGUEZ." The parishioners contended that the sum included the monies they had specifically requested be kept separate from the Diocese funds.

With questions about Michael Rodriguez' official status in the Catholic Church, because of the controversy about the allegations about missing monies, the Diocese of El Paso issued a letter to the Diocese of Charlotte on July 8, 2013 attesting that Rodriguez "is a priest in good standing." The letter adds, "that nothing in his background in any way limits or disqualifies him" from the ministry.

On November 10, 2014, the Diocese of El Paso removed Rodriguez as the Administrator of Sacred Heart Mission that is in Presidio and ordered him to undertake a six-month sabbatical. Although he remains in good standing within the Diocese of El Paso, essentially he was not functioning as a priest in good standing.

Remember that in a civil lawsuit filed by the former bishop along with Arturo Bañuelos in January 2012 Diocese officials were alleging that Rodriguez had stolen money from his former parish. Yet, the Diocese issued a letter to another diocese letting them know that Michael Rodriguez is in good standing with the Diocese.

Not only is this contradictory but if the allegations are true then it shows an attempt to cover up wrongdoing by sending the priest elsewhere without disclosing the allegations.

However, it is not as simple as that.

The former El Paso bishop went outside of the church to allege wrongdoing by one of his former priests. The bishop filed a civil lawsuit alleging theft of money yet did not file a criminal complaint against the alleged thief. Furthermore, as you can tell by the letter and the lawsuit, the Diocese of El Paso was not pursuing Rodriguez for the money, but rather it was the former bishop of El Paso and another church official. Why?

As of May of this year and according to a family member of Rodriguez, the lawsuit and Michael Rodriguez's sabbatical are on some type of "holding pattern" with no action on either front. It is important to note that under the Catholic Church's hierarchy the bishop; in this case Armando Ochoa wields considerable power on where a priest is placed. On one hand, Rodriguez is on sabbatical, kind of like limbo, while facing allegations of wrongdoing outside of the Church's internal mechanisms. Keep in mind that the Diocese considers him in good standing but nonetheless keeps Rodriguez in limbo as to his future. In the meantime, the lawsuit filed against him is continuously delayed.

Everything about this case is a classic example of a corrupt cover up by church officials. Through innuendo, the legal system and especially delaying tactics it appears that the case of Michael Rodriguez is a case of ostracizing a priest because he became vocal in a political debacle. Rather than address the matter through the proper channels of the Church, it seems like a personal vendetta has been initiated

by a former bishop with the tacit support of the officials of the Diocese of El Paso and by extension the Catholic Church.

The cover up lies in the fact that allegations have been levied but rather than prove them one way or the other through the normal channels, the church processes or the legal system; instead the allegations are left while the answers are delayed for as long as possible.

By all measures of common sense, Michael Rodriguez is being punished by church officials bypassing the systems and thus it appears corrupt in nature.

Conclusion

I realize that this is a really long essay and it involves many uncomfortable aspects of religion, sexual abuse and El Paso politics. I felt it was important to give you as much detail as possible without overwhelming you. There is so much more information that I did not include here.

The reason I found this so important is that it starts to answer the question of how the corruption is incubated in El Paso by what is supposed to be the moral compass of the community's consciousness. The Diocese of El Paso has for years systematically taught through its actions that corruption is not only the way Catholics should behave but also gives power to those in authority over the city.

I realize those are strong words but consider the following.

Almost everyone has heard the whispers of corruption in El Paso. There are numerous instances of corrupt activities in the city, some prosecuted and others ignored. The business community was "shocked" to read that former Ft. Bliss commander Dana Pittard was reprimanded for activities that can best be defined as corrupt. This is the same business community that gave Bob Jones an award for his business astuteness. Jones is currently in jail for corruption and will likely die in prison.

While many were arguing that Larry Medina was corrupt, he was being bestowed the Conquistador Award. The office of the Texas Attorney General, that advocates ignoring the highest court of the country, is the same agency that agrees with the City of El Paso that Steve Ortega may keep the government files in his possession.

Basically, it is a culture of corruption that does not understand that it is corrupt.

A culture is incubated and encouraged through education. Corruption is a moral dilemma and one of the largest authorities of the moral compass is the Church that coincidentally has shown to be corrupt for many years.

How can you eradicate the culture of corruption if the corruptors also includes the Church?

Epilogue

I would like to take this opportunity to offer a heartfelt thanks to an individual that has asked me to keep him anonymous although this series would have been impossible without his willingness to answer my questions and for sharing the dossier, he put together that is the basis of this series. Much of what I

do is based on research and the fact of the matter is the research takes an ordinate amount of time. Without the dossier that the individual shared with me, it is unlikely I would have written this essay.

Many times many of you offer me leads and information that leads to many of my blog posts. I get the credit but the fact remains that those of you who share their information with me deserve the credit. I always ask you if you want me to give you credit and almost always the answer is a request to keep you anonymous. I understand why but know that although I many not give you credit by name that your unselfishness and willingness to share your data with me is something I am grateful for every day.

Sources:

1. First person account from an anonymous source about what he witnessed. The accounts are derived from various interviews in May, June and July 2015.
2. Podles, Leon J.; *Sacrilege: Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church*; Crossland Press, 2008
3. Mendham Borough Police Memorandum addressed to "Whom it May Concern" and dated November 21, 2011.
4. Letter dated November 27, 2011 from Robert Francis McEnroe to Mrs. Villaseñor with copies to Armando Ochoa and Francis Smith.
5. Mendham Borough Police Department Investigation Reports starting on February 11, 2005 and ending March 29, 2005. Eleven pages of police reports. Department case number: 2005/02786.