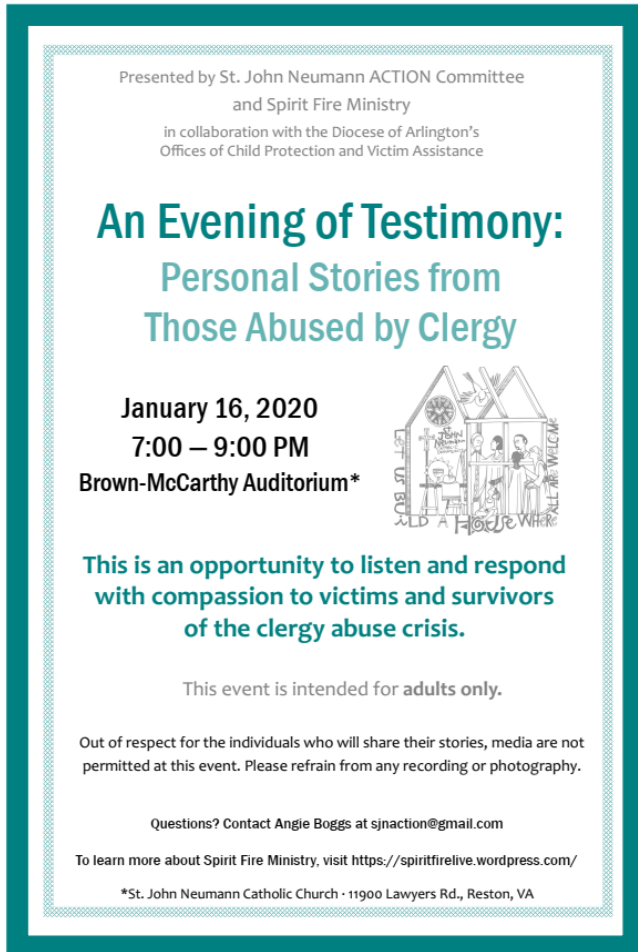


**Summary Report, January 16, 2020:  
An Evening of Testimony: Personal Stories from Those Abused by Clergy**

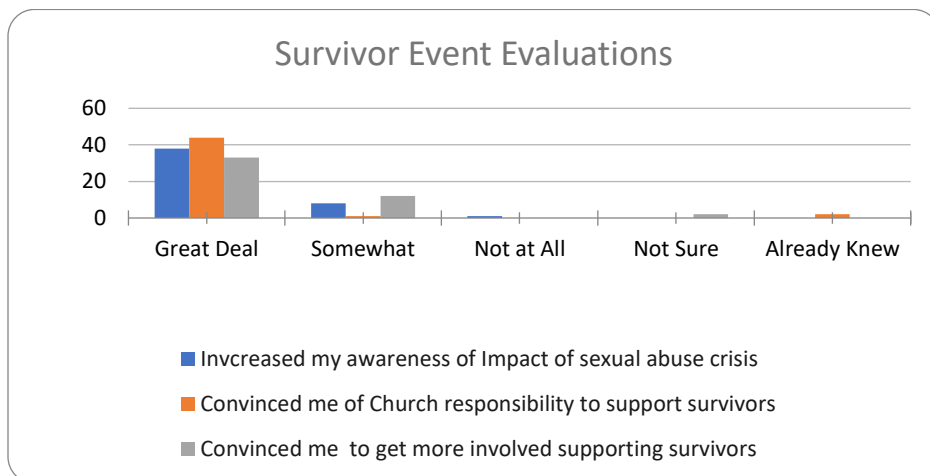


This event was very well attended, thanks to significant promotional efforts by SJN staff, the Action Committee and the Office of Victim Assistance of the Diocese of Arlington. Attendance was at 80+ people from several parishes in addition to SJN (e.g., St. Thomas à Becket, Reston; St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax; St. Theresa, Ashburn; Holy Trinity, Georgetown; OLG, Vienna; St. Andrew, Detroit, MI).

Evaluations were completed by 47 attendees, (55% response rate). Most responses to the first three questions indicated attendees learned a great deal from this event about the impact of sexual abuse in the Church, the responsibility of the Church to support victims/survivors and the importance of becoming personally involved in supporting victims and survivors.

Comments about how people felt during the evening ranged from sad, angry, stunned, moved, encouraged, hopeful, wanting to know more. Almost all expressed how powerful the survivors' stories were for them, that the topic was treated respectfully

and in a balanced way. Some felt stunned by the extent of sexual abuse in our communities, and realized there is a great need to support all survivors, not just those abused by clergy.



Comments about what parishes should do to support victims and survivors of sexual abuse fell into six categories:

1. Learn more about sexual abuse and increase awareness within our parish by having more listening sessions and continue to support the work of the Action Committee;
2. Reach out to other parishes and dioceses to learn what others are doing;
3. Prayer, regular (e.g., monthly) prayer services, prayer cards in pews for victims/survivors of sexual abuse;
4. Increase availability of mental health and counseling resources to support victims/survivors, including parish specific support groups for victims/survivors and referrals for treatment (e.g., Catholic Charities);
5. Resources for parents and parishioners in general to learn how to recognize early warning indicators of childhood abuse and actions they can take to prevent continued harm;
6. Influence the hierarchy of the Church to better prevent sexual abuse, support survivors and hold abusers accountable;

The messages for Teresa Pitt Green and the survivor panel expressed heart-felt thanks for their courage and willingness to share their experiences. Some were surprised by the level of forgiveness the survivors expressed and their ability to go forward in hope and love, given the pain they had experienced. Many expressed strong belief in the ministry of Spirit Fire, to continue to speak out and advance healing.

Fifteen attendees expressed interest in receiving more information and/or joining the Action Committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Angela Boggs, Chair, Subcommittee for Outreach to Victims/Survivors