

Father Dietzen misses the mark on abuse

In response to the column by Father John Dietzen (CR, July 8) in which he attempts to answer the question, “Do abusive priests forfeit power to consecrate bread and wine,” I take exception to his approach to this sensitive and multi-dimensional question.

Father Dietzen states, “Jesus never promised that all his priests or bishops or other ministers would always be holy or wise or even competent.” Maybe Jesus did not make such a promise in so many words, but I think it’s more than reasonable for Catholics – the children and the parents and the faithful of the Church – to expect that their priest is a holy disciple of God, called to live a life of holiness and to represent God in his actions and words.

Father Dietzen also writes, “... we are not (or shouldn’t be) spiritually destroyed over human weakness, regardless of where we find it. Our hope and love and faith are ultimately grounded on something – or Someone – else.” This statement indicates a lack of understanding of the deep and lasting effects of clergy abuse on one’s Catholic faith and his/her relationship with God – something we in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have come to appreciate thanks to the courageous survivors in our community.

D’Alessandro is director of the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Office of Child & Youth Protection.