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What is the truth?

The viewpoints of

Roger Puchalski, publisher

When Lech Walesa visited Buffalo years ago I covered one of his press conferences. As the reporters were leaving the event, Carl Bernstein asked me if I knew a particular individual he was looking for. Bernstein was working on his book *His Holiness: John Paul II & the History of Our Time*.

I couldn't help him but I directed him to someone I thought could. I then asked Bernstein to autograph my press pass and he did - "To my colleague - Carl Bernstein."

He's now writing about Hillary Clinton and was asked about uncovering who is the real Hillary. He remarked that his job, as is the job of all journalists, is to get the "best obtainable version of the truth."

As the *Journey in Faith & Grace* unfolds it is very difficult to get the "best obtainable version of the truth."

It is sad to say there are people afraid to say what they know for fear of retribution from the church. They say if they speak out about what they .. know, their church may then be marked for closure.

Sometimes the "truth" doesn't seem logical. For example, the diocesan spokesman says there is a reuse plan for closed parishes.

When there is a priest shortage and the priest becomes the frontman to decide who buys what property of the closed parish or parishes, is that a plan?

At the seminary do they have courses like "Property Management and Real Estate Sales 101" or the 200 level course "Will They Flip It or Strip It?"

When dissenters offer constructive suggestions like linkage vs. merger, lay administrators, utilization of retired priests or foreign priests and are summarily dismissed or criticized, who is the party resistant to change?

Maybe the *Journey* is like Watergate and the key is to "follow the money." Many people see that as the root cause of many of the problems. Did the \$2 million left by Waldemar Kaminski to St. John Kanty have an impact on whether it stayed open? Does the "saleability" of parish property influence decision makers? Does the affluence of a community give it more clout?

There are answers from all sides in the journey, but which is the truth?

I don't think the "best obtainable version of the truth" has yet been told.

I'd like to follow in Carl Bernstein's footsteps, but I don't have a Woodward nor a Deepthroat. At least not yet.

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CORRECTION:

Last week this column repeated questions asked by those affected by church closings including a reference to a \$2 million donation to St. John Kanty Parish. After reviewing the will of Mr. Waldemar Kaminski, that question was inappropriate as he did not leave any sizable donation to that parish. To the members of St. John Kanty Parish, we sincerely apologize for the error.