



## A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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**19 September 2018, 4:28 PM**

### **Homily for the Service of Lament**

It's hard to go to Confession, but I think it's even harder to leave the confessional, because we leave with the challenge to do things differently.

This service is like going to Confession. Even though clergy sex abuse and the failure to protect isn't your sin or mine...

I acknowledge it is a grave sin, made worse when the abuser was ordained to protect and heal, and I lament the hurt done to victims and others.

And like going to Confession, I have said sorry and asked pardon for the harm done by priests here in the past, and by bishops elsewhere.

But people have rightfully reminded me that *that* isn't enough; it's also necessary to have a purpose and plan for amendment; do things differently.

Towards that end, I remain committed to report accusations to police and to the Review Board, and to remove offending priests from ministry.

But as the current scandal is as much about bishops, who didn't do what they said they did, I understand if you find it hard to trust me.

I have been wracking my brain over what more needs to be done to prevent harm in the future, and to restore trust, not so much in me as in the Church.

Thoughtful people have been making suggestions about what to do.

Some suggestions, such as ordaining women and married men, are not cures related to the cause of the problems; at least I don't think so.

I could be wrong; I'm not saying I'm right because I'm a bishop. Regardless, if those are indeed a cure, it's above my pay grade to do anything about it.

Other suggestions that might bring about a cure, and that I might be able to do something to advance them, are being given consideration.

Indeed, some are already being pursued, like inviting more women to serve on the Archdiocesan Review Board.

Or encouraging everyone, if you see or hear something, say something.

Related to that, one suggestion is to find a mechanism whereby reporting accusations and accountability for action don't have to be filtered through me, or my office.

Another suggestion is to correct the spirit of clericalism wherever it raises its ugly head; Pope Francis has named this as part of the cure for the Church.

*Clericalism is the belief that one is entitled to go first, to be served by others, and served the best of things; that he or she is superior to others, and so entitled to respect and deference; that she or he is the expert, and so the last word in the exercise of authority while others are bystanders, passively receiving what is decided.*

Sometimes deacons, priests and bishops believe that, and sometimes others believe it about them; either way, it isn't true, good, or in any way beautiful.

Personally, I don't like to call that belief clericalism, because it implies only deacons, priests, and bishops can err that way, which I don't think is true.

Most priests are humble, loving, hardworking servant leaders; they didn't seek ordination for the sake of power, privilege, or perks.

Okay, maybe they are at greater risk of falling into that, because they are given special dress, a title, a seat up front, and put on a pedestal by others.

Maybe that's why, in the second Eucharistic Prayer, the presider prays specifically and only for clergy; because they are at greater risk, and so are in special need of prayer.

But anyone can behave in the spirit of clericalism, man or woman, ordained or not, wherever power is at play, whether as a parish pastor or a sacristan.

So, what might we call this attitude and behavior instead of clericalism? A lie? The spirit of the world?

*Jesus addresses this lie, this worldly spirit with a corrective to all of his followers: you must be the last of all, and the servant of all; to be exalted, you must humble yourself; you must give in order to receive, and you receive according to the measure you use to give to others; do this – forgiveness, service, even self-sacrifice – in memory of me, says Jesus.*

All need to wield this word of Jesus as a shield over our minds and hearts, lest the devil plant there the bad seed of the weed of the spirit of the world.

And if that happens, anyone of us, and maybe especially clerics, can begin to live the lie of the spirit of the world, and when that happens, woe to us!

I will continue to wrack my brain for how to do things differently, in order to prevent clergy sex abuse, and to protect people from harm.

Towards that end, I will especially search for ways to cure the lie of the spirit of the world in clerics, and in other Church members, but first in myself.

I think it was Catherine of Siena who counseled, that the best way to correct is to give example in your own life of what you hope to see in others.

But I pray that we all, for the purpose of amendment, and to protect ourselves from the bad seed of the weed that is the devil's lie... that we all wield the shield of the word of Jesus:

*You must be the last of all, and the servant of all; to be exalted, you must humble yourself; you must give in order to receive, and you receive according to what you give to others; do this – forgiveness, service, even self-sacrifice – in memory of me, says Jesus.*

May it be so. Amen.

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### Prayer of Consecration to Mary

Mary, according to the word and will of your Son and our Savior, Jesus, we lay claim to you as our mother, intercessor, and teacher.

In the communion of saints, we know that, even though you now enjoy heaven, you are still with us, a part of us, to care for us, plead on our behalf, and teach us.

And so, just like at the wedding feast of Cana, when your motherly heart saw there was no more wine, making that need your own, we know that you see that, in a different way, we too have no more wine... no joy, no gladness:

- Victims of clergy sex abuse were harmed in a horrible way, and are hurting still, as are their families and friends.
- Members of the Catholic Church ashamed and angry, some even to the point of leaving the Church.
- Priests demoralized by the sin and crime of clergy sex abuse, and losing confidence in the leadership of their bishops.
- People in the wider community scandalized, and their derision making them deaf to our preaching and blind to our witness.

We know that your motherly heart moves you to care for us, about us, to make our need your own.

And we are sure that your motherly care moves you to pray for us to Jesus, begging him, as at the Cana wedding feast, to turn our water of hurt, anger and sadness into the wine of holy joy and gladness.

We need healing. We need conversion. We need purity in thought, word and deed. We need resolve to protect the little ones from harm. We need heroic striving for holiness to counter the sins of clergy sex abuse and failure to report. We need peace and unity in the Church at all levels.

And Mary, we claim you also as our teacher, commending ourselves to you, to form us as disciples of your Son, Jesus.

We hear the lesson you taught the waiters at the wedding feast of Cana: do whatever he tells you.

We will try, with your help, to know, understand, embrace and live the teachings and example of Jesus, recorded in the Gospel, explained in the Catechism, and lived by the saints.

We fly to your patronage, Mary, mother, intercessor, and teacher; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque