

Today is November 14th, Saturday of the thirty-second week in Ordinary Time. In today's Scriptures St. John tells the local church presided over by a certain Gaius to supply traveling missionaries with the wherewithal they need to continue the work of evangelization. "Please help them in a way worthy of God to continue their journey" (3 John 5-8).

In the gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the widow who achieves justice from the dishonest judge because of her constant importuning. His point? To assure them that God will secure the rights of those who call out to him in prayer. But he ends by asking, "When the Son of Man comes (at the end of time), will he find faith on earth?"

Questions for reflection: How do I support the Church's task of making Christ known so that people may come to believe in him? Name some of the ways. How consistent am I in asking for the grace to further justice in family relationships? In social relationships? In political relationships? Do I have a longing and a zeal for justice, that is, for the right ordering of human relationships based on respect for the dignity and rights of every person?

Last Tuesday the Vatican released the long-awaited report on former Cardinal McCarrick: how he advanced in the Church despite widespread reports about his engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior with adults under his pastoral care. (When it was proven in 2018 that he had also abused underage persons, he lost his title of Cardinal and was expelled from the ordained priesthood.)

Archbishop Gregory issued a statement the day of the report's release in which he said, "Though I am only now receiving this document, as you are, and have not had an opportunity to review it carefully... my heart hurts for all who will be shocked, saddened, scandalized and angered by the revelations contained therein." The Archbishop said he would speak to us about the report once he has reviewed it carefully.

I have not read the report (it is over 400 pages long). Sources whom I trust who have read the report tell me it tells a sad story of human weakness, deception, cowardice, and jockeying for worldly power. It is hardly the first such story in the history of the Church, nor is it likely to be last. The Lord warned us we would have to deal with evil both inside and outside the Church until he returns at the end of time. Until then, each of us has the responsibility to root out evil from our own hearts through a life of prayer and repentance. No one is exempt.

It seems from the report that Pope John Paul II heard rumors of McCarrick's immoral behavior in the late 1990's, but nothing substantive was ever brought to him. (In fact, three American bishops from New Jersey who knew of McCarrick's immoral conduct concealed it and subsequently lied about it to the Vatican in order "to protect" their benefactor. These very same bishops had been appointed bishops through McCarrick's recommendation.) When McCarrick heard that rumors about him had reached the Holy Father's ears, he flew to Rome and protested his innocence in a private audience with the Pope. Apparently, the Holy Father decided to believe McCarrick—a most unfortunate error, but not a malicious one. McCarrick has fooled many, many people throughout his many years as a cleric, including many of the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese of Washington.

When Pope Benedict was elected pope in 2005, he immediately accepted Cardinal McCarrick's resignation as Archbishop of Washington. He subsequently asked McCarrick to refrain from all public

activities and maintain a private life of prayer and penance. Unfortunately, McCarrick ignored the Pope's request. It wasn't until credible allegations concerning McCarrick's abuse of minors were raised in 2017 and then proven in 2018 that McCarrick was stripped of his office as Cardinal and laicized by Pope Francis. McCarrick still claims he is innocent, but this is patently false.

No member of the Church on earth is without sin or weakness, though there are still many saints among us who live in a state of grace and are advanced in holiness. But even the most advanced be continually on the watch for sin. Otherwise, it is impossible to be saved. This is true for everyone: Pope, cardinal, bishop, priest, deacon, lay person.

The latest restrictions imposed by Prince George's County to stem the spread of Covid 19 do not require us to make any changes at St. Hugh. We have already been abiding by them. We are taking all due precautions to make sure in-person worship at St. Hugh as safe as possible. Even though I am at high risk, I feel very safe celebrating Mass with a congregation present. So far, our attendance is considerably less than the 25% maximum capacity required by law. So, should you decide to return to in-person Mass there will be room for you.

Have a beautiful weekend and observance of the Lord's Day.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Walter