

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
Peace be with you!

### **In Search of the Truth...**

As I mentioned on the weekend of August 18/19, 2018, before each Mass, I am deeply disturbed by the new allegations of sexual abuse by clergy and even more troubled by the cover-up of some of these allegations by Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals and now, allegedly, the Holy Father himself.

Please read the rest of this communication in light of this part of my previous statement. As I stated before those Masses, these children and teenagers, these victims, should be the focus of our prayers and the Church needs to reach out to them and offer them healing, a chance to reclaim their lives. A chance to encounter the real Christ, who saves us and sets us free in the splendor and power of His love.

There seems to be new information coming out each day about these allegations, each seemingly pointing to people of higher and higher authority knowingly covering up grave misconduct of priests and bishops. This is very sad and causes me great pain and I am sure many of you are likewise-pained by these reports. I quite frankly find this to be very demonic. Jesus reminds us, certain demons can only be cast out by prayer and fasting. We need to be faithful to the love of Christ, His teachings and as strange as it might sound- His Church. This is a crisis of fidelity and leadership.

As your pastor, I want to acknowledge your frustration and concern in this matter and give you some encouragement. However, I think it is worth laying out in broad strokes, the facts of the situation, so you know what it is we are dealing with.

#### **Late 1990s – Early 2000s**

In the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the Church in the United States increasingly became more aware of a problem of clergy and other ministers in the Church sexually abusing minors who were entrusted to their care. Following the explosion of allegations out of Boston and other major metropolitan areas throughout the country, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops met in Dallas in 2002 to discuss how this could be collectively dealt with at the Conference level and how that could be supported in each Diocese.

The Bishops authored what has been commonly referred to as the Dallas Charter in which three major points were made. First, any adult who had a credible allegation of sexual abuse against them was to be removed from active ministry immediately. Second, moving forward, any adult working with children in the Church would be required to be trained in Safe Environment protocol which included training on identifying signs of sexual abuse in minors. These adults would also have to submit to an extensive criminal background check on a regular and ongoing basis. These trainings and background checks extended to all clergy (including Bishops), all religious, and all lay employees (whether paid or volunteer). Third, the Bishops sought to understand the cause of this problem and began to issue new policies regarding the admission of men to the seminary - namely, that these new candidates for the priesthood would undergo a much more intensified psychological evaluation which not only sought to identify any issues of a psychological nature,

but also any issues related to sexuality which might be problematic for the parishioners, for the candidate, for other candidates, or for the Church at large.

With the establishment of the Dallas Charter, Dioceses have established Victim Assistance Ministry teams in which anyone who has been abused or anyone aware of abuse is urged to contact. To report abuse within our Diocese, please contact:

- Doris May, Victim Assistance Minister, at 765-464-4988 or
- Charles “Max” Layden, Conduct in Ministry Officer. (765) 463-2242.

Following the 2002 situation, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sought to understand more completely why their priests were engaged in sexual activity with minors. The Bishops commissioned the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York to investigate and research this matter.

This commission identified that the great number of credible allegations were made against priests who experienced same-sex attraction and an attraction to post-pubescent males. While there are other situations, the great majority of credible and substantiated allegations were against homosexual priests who victimized adolescent boys. This study was originally published in 2004.

Following the Dallas Charter and the findings of the John Jay Report, the Vatican wanted to ensure seminaries in the United States were places where men could prayerfully discern a vocation to the priesthood and the men studying for the priesthood were of the caliber needed for the Church. Dioceses were not to send candidates with deep-seated same sex attractions. As a result, an Apostolic Visitation of Diocesan Seminaries and Religious Houses of Priestly Formation was scheduled and took place between September 2005-July 2006.

It seemed like things were being taken care of in a comprehensive manner in these years following 2002 with the publication of the Dallas Charter and the findings of both the John Jay Report and the Apostolic Visitation to Diocesan Seminaries and Religious Houses of Priestly Formation in the United States. The John Jay Report was revisited again in 2011 and some new information was provided and some points from the original publication were clarified.

### **2011 - Present**

From 2011 to where we are presently, there was very little reported on clergy sex abuse throughout our country. It seemed as though these problems had been mostly eradicated and if there was a problem, it was incredibly rare.

This summer a new and credible allegation involving a minor was made against the former Cardinal Archbishop of Washington D.C. - Theodore McCarrick. The allegation was from the 1950s when McCarrick was a newly ordained priest serving at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City. The Archdiocese of New York investigated the allegation and found it to be credible. Shortly thereafter, another allegation came forward involving a minor which was also found to be credible. It was also clear from his history that Cardinal McCarrick had a same-sex attraction involving some of his seminarians and priests in the Diocese of Metuchen, the Archdiocese of Newark, and then again in the Archdiocese of Washington DC. In response to the allegations involving minors, Pope Francis accepted McCarrick’s resignation from the College of Cardinals.

Following the report of the McCarrick case, news broke regarding the Grand Jury Investigation into six Catholic Dioceses in Pennsylvania. It was found that some 300 priests were mentioned in this report and some 1000 minors were victim to these clergymen. As the details of each of these priests has been investigated further, it has come out that the current Cardinal Archbishop of Washington D.C. had allowed predatory priests to stay in active ministry in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, where he served as Bishop prior to replacing McCarrick in Washington D.C.

One of the most difficult revelations came about just this weekend in which the former Apostolic Nuncio, who served as the point-man and spokesman for the Pope in the United States, wrote a testimony in which he presents his knowledge of the situation regarding McCarrick and how it was dealt with by Pope Benedict XVI and then by Pope Francis. (In light of this report, I believe due process needs to play out, so all information may be examined for truth.) Having said that, the report points to the following:

The testimony of the former Apostolic Nuncio indicates Pope Benedict XVI had seriously restricted what Cardinal McCarrick was permitted to do. He was no longer to speak publicly or offer Mass publicly. He was told to live his remaining years in prayer and penance as a result of the allegations that he had been sexually involved with seminarians and priests. While these allegations did not involve minors, a cleric engaging in sexual activity, and sexual activity with other men who were subordinate to him, is sexual harassment and a clear violation of his vocation to be a chaste celibate. It was clearly a power differential by one who could choose to ordain these men or not. It is said McCarrick failed to adhere to these restrictions, rejecting the Holy Father's instructions, while being covered by high-ranking Vatican officials until the election of Pope Francis.

According to the former Apostolic Nuncio, the restrictions put in place by Pope Benedict XVI did not carry over with the newly elected Pope Francis. McCarrick began to be seen in public once again, and according to the Nuncio, was in contact with Pope Francis. In his testimony, the former Nuncio explains he had shared with Pope Francis the restrictions placed on McCarrick and the reasons for such restrictions. The remarkable thing here is that Pope Francis, according to the former Nuncio, did nothing to enforce those restrictions even with the knowledge provided to him by the Apostolic Nuncio.

### **Moving Forward**

As we move forward, I want to express to you some encouragement as I know this situation is very discouraging and confusing to faithful Catholics, both lay and ordained. First, I would encourage you to keep in mind that Jesus Christ, who founded our Church, expressed *the gates of hell would not prevail against it and He promised to be with us always, until the end of time*. While there are some very high-level people being implicated in this matter, they are not the Church - they do not make up the Church - the Church does not exist because of them. The Church exists because Jesus Christ founded it to Worship God, to serve the spiritually and materially poor, to continue His mission and to communicate His graces to all of humanity until He returns in glory. These abusers, like Judas, betrayed their Church and their priesthood. If it is not Christ, it is the devil.

Second, while this is in no way meant to downplay the seriousness of our current problem, and we should be vigilant toward any victim who present themselves, it is worth noting that the great majority of these sexual assaults happened between 1960-1990. This is not to say there have not been more recent credible allegations, but the majority are historical. This should give us some trust that the changes made starting in 2002, especially with regard to the seminaries, is working. My friends, we cannot become complacent in our resolve, we must play our role in raising up Shepherds after the heart of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Third, the Church needs to be purified. Every last one of us needs to call on God to purify our Church and those who lead it. Some have said the Bishops were given the opportunity to clean the Church in 2002 and apparently did not do a very good job. Now we pray, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Mary, the Mother of God will come in to clean the Church in a way only a mother can - one in which not even a cobweb or speck of dust will remain. I urge you to call upon the Holy Spirit and offer many prayers to Jesus through Mary, asking that the Church and her leaders be purified and conformed more truly to her divine Son. Please know, the evil one will not be happy with our faithfulness as "the Body of Christ." He will try to destroy our resolve. Be faithful and steadfast in your faith.

We also need to get serious about our own sanctity. The Church is only as strong as her weakest member. Every member of the Body of Christ has a particular role to play and if one part of that body is sick, so too will the rest of the body suffer. Pray fervently, now more than ever, asking God for the graces to help you individually in becoming the Saint He created you to be. You are alive at this time and at this point in Church history for a reason.

While some may think this is an unusual time in the history of the Church, it is important to note that in 2000 years we have experienced many difficulties and many setbacks, generally because of sinful people not living up to the demands that Christ lays out for His followers. One such example was with the Arian controversy of the 4th century in which a great number of our bishops were holding on to a heretical understanding of the Person of Christ. The People of God, the laity; however, knew that these heretical bishops were wrong and called them out for it. How this looks in our current situation: how many Bishops have gone astray, I am not sure, but we are the Body of Christ, and we need to help one another on our way to Heaven - none of us can do it on our own and none of us can do it without the grace of God. Our pope, bishops, priests, deacons and lay leaders need your prayers.

My final plea to you is simple: Become the Saint God created you to be. This will help purify the Church in ways we may never know, but believe me, Holy Church will be purified and many Saints can and will come from this. As the history of the Church shows, many great saints grew out of difficult times in the Church - this time is especially difficult, so rest assured it is an important time to work to grow in sanctity. As it says in Scripture, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Trust me when I say, God is showering His grace upon the Church in hopes of making many saints out of this current crisis. How? May I suggest the following:

Prayer, please pray for these innocent victims, all baptized Christians to become the saints and leaders God has created them to be, and for the Church, that God may truly purify His Church through our daily praying of the rosary & St. Michael prayer.

Perpetual Adoration at Church of the Blessed Sacrament, “Come Let Us Adore Him.”

Penance, perhaps Wednesday and Friday, sacrifice meat and desserts for our personal and communal holiness.

**Will you help Jesus rebuild His Church? Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!**

We read in Sunday’s first reading from Joshua, “If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve...” I urge everyone to commit their lives to the service of Jesus Christ and the purification of His Bride, the Holy Church.

Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Pray for us!



**Fr. Ted Dudzinski, Pastor**

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