

August 18, 2018

To the faithful,

This week, we are once again plagued with horror and sadness in light of the Pennsylvania grand jury's report that released decades of sexual abuse cases by priests and Church person and then covered up by the bishops. This is the latest of coverups that have plagued the universal Church. These coverups by our bishops are not just immoral and unjust, but are also illegal and further breakdown the trust of the faithful. In these cases, justice needs to be served and brought to light, but also a purification and healing of the Church is needed.

This news brings me great sorrow and sadness as some of our leaders have continued to act as false prophets and continue to wear sheep clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves (Matt7:15). As the faithful continue to lose hope in their clergy, they have also lost credibility in the Proclamation of the Gospel due to the unfaithful ones' actions and lack of transparency, and is now wondering, "Where does one turn to?" The Church should be a place where one finds hope, healing, and growth. But instead today the Church is plagued with pain, suffering and confusion as it has been turned into a den of thieves by some unfaithful clergy.

But, sadly, what pains me the most are the faithful who are leaving Christ behind, due to the scandals. Although I can certainly understand this very human response, with all due respect, when one feels hurt and neglected, that is the time to return to the Mass. The Church is made up of more than just feeble men and women; it is made up of Christ who is our center. We are a Eucharistic people, centered around the Eucharist. Therefore, the Church, though human in nature, is also Divine. What is lacking within the Church, within the priest, even the unfaithful priests, Christ makes up, so we may have Him in the Eucharist. As painful as this may be, and we all know people have left the Church out of disdain and disgust, Christ who is the bridegroom of the Church also Cleanses the Temple. In John chapter two, Jesus enters the temple area, cleanses it, getting rid of those who are making his Father's house a mockery, so that the faithful may worship, and experience God. During this time, our Church is in a need of a dire spiritual cleansing. It is through Christ that this will happen. We as a community - as a flock - need to come together, back to the Good Shepherd, who is Jesus, and to pray that He will continue to help us in this spiritual battle that is happening within our Church.

Although the devil is truly at work, and is endangering the spiritual lives of many, there is a whole army of saints and angels at our beckon call. There are two that I would encourage us to call upon during this time. First, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the first one to say yes to our Lord, but also in the very first book of the Bible in Genesis 3:15, there is an image of a women crushing the head of the Devil, whom this foreshadows Mary later on. Mary is a very powerful spiritual intercessor. Offer a Hail Mary for the Church on a daily basis. Secondly, Saint Michael the Archangel is the protector of the Kingdom. In the book of Revelation, we hear the epic battle in the Kingdom of Heaven, where Michael kicks out the devil and all of his followers. These fallen angels failed to worship God, and wanted to be god instead. These demons and the devil continue to prowl around Earth seeking to ruin Souls, and ultimately the Church, even from within. Please offer the Prayer to St. Michael on a daily basis for your own protection, for loved ones, and for the Church.

As I have been praying over the last few days, praying for the reparation of my sins, and those of the Church, I know that our Lord is offended by all of this that has transpired and continues to hurt His Church. I was nudged during prayer, to put out an invitation to the faithful and to let you know that I will be leading a 24 hour adoration on our Altar, here at St. John Neumann. I will remain here for that time in prayer before the monstrance, offering prayers of reparation of the sins of the Church, healing for those hurt by the Church, the faithful who have lost their way, and for the purification of the Church. All are welcome to stop by for a period of time to bring your whole being, filled with emotions and pain, but also to regain and find hope again in Christ. I encourage you to invite others to come as well, especially those who have lost their way. The adoration will begin at noon on Tuesday August 21, which is the memorial of Saint Pope Pius X who had a deep devotion for the Eucharist, and even encouraged the faithful to receive the Eucharist frequently. Adoration will conclude at noon on Wednesday August 22, with Mass at 12:15 pm celebrating the Memorial of Mary Queen of Heaven.

Lastly, I know that this has touched many people's lives in different ways, and you are filled with many emotions. If you need to talk, please know that I am available to meet with you and journey with you. As a pledge that I have taken, along with all of the staff and volunteers here at St. John Neumann, we are here to continue to protect our children, the most vulnerable, and to bring about healing and human dignity to our community and our Church.

With Christ's love,

Fr. Christopher Martel

Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our protection against the wickedness and
snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.