

August 24, 2018

"Do you also want to leave?"

Dear Parishioners,

In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus asks the Twelve this heart-wrenching question. This comes after a scandalous moment when "...many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him."

After last week's Grand Jury report from Pennsylvania, perhaps many of us have felt like leaving, and perhaps some already have. Many of us have felt sickened, outraged, betrayed, hurt, confused, and maybe even ashamed or embarrassed to be members of the Catholic Church.

Sexual abuse is a universal human problem and evil that we all must work to end. We must not ever tolerate this horrible sacrilege of the purity and goodness of God's gift of human sexuality. In his letter to the Ephesians Saint Paul writes: "Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you."

Yet, reluctantly, we must acknowledge that this evil has occurred among those who should be the examples and guardians of purity - our clergy. Sexual abuse is always a betrayal of trust, but betrayal of trust and innocence by members of the clergy is one of the worst, and that is why we are so hurt by it. That is why many wonder if they can still be a part of this Church

As your pastor and your deacon, along with the entire parish staff and volunteers, we renew our pledge and promise to protect you, especially children and youth, from this evil. In 2002, the bishops of the United States promulgated the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which established the Safe Environment Program in every diocese and parish in the country. Included in this program is the mandatory criminal background check of every clergy member, employee and volunteer who has contact with minors in church ministries. Clergy and employees are mandated reporters of abuse. Any suspicion of abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services or to the police. (This is California law.) Every diocese has an Independent Review Board of laypersons to review and advise the bishops about allegations of sexual misconduct and abuse. There is also a Pastoral Response/Victim's Assistance Coordinator to give immediate support to victims and their families. Each parish has a Safe Environment Coordinator to oversee the implementation of these policies. And each year the US bishops hire independent auditors to make sure that the Charter is being followed in every diocese

In short, no other institution in the world has done more to eliminate this evil from its midst than the Catholic Church in the United States. So how are we to understand the report from Pennsylvania? A closer look at the report reveals that over 99% of the cases of abuse there occurred before 2002 and the establishment of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. (In this regard, much of the headlines and reporting has been misleading and unfairly hurtful.) Of course, nothing can diminish or excuse the horror of what has occurred at any time in the past. But we have to stand up now and say that the Catholic Church in the United

States has, in fact, changed and is doing more than any other institution in the world to eliminate the evil of sexual abuse.

While making sure that no further abuse will occur, we dedicate ourselves to healing the victims of past abuse. The Sacrament of Anointing is not just for the sick, but for the wounded as well, and we encourage anyone with this wound to come and receive healing. And we invite everyone to join us in praying the Novena for the Abuse Crisis/Accountability, Transparency and Healing found at the end of this email.

In this week's bulletin you will find a letter from our Apostolic Administrator Bishop Gerald Wilkerson addressing the abuse crisis. We encourage you to read it. (It is also available on our website, resurrection-aptos.org)

Back to the question that Jesus asked the Twelve, and that he asks us now: "Do you also want to go?" Let us pray for the grace to rededicate ourselves to following Jesus, who calls us to reform the Church that he founded so that it can carry out his mission to seek and to heal and to save the lost. May we echo Peter's response to Jesus: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Blessings,

Fr. Romeo Evangelista, Pastor

Deacon Patrick Conway, Pastoral Associate

The Novena for the Abuse Crisis | Accountability, Transparency and Healing

(A novena is prayed for nine consecutive days. You may start this at any time. You can pray it by yourself or with others.)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Father in Heaven, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Holy Spirit, comfort us, give us clarity, and bring light to this darkness and evil.

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.

Saint Peter, pray for the Church, that it may be re-built, healed, and made holy.

St. Charles Lwanga and St. Monica, pray for the abused, the survivors and for justice.

St. Catherine of Siena, pray for reform and restoration of the clergy.

St. John Vianney, pray for the holiness of priests and bishops.

St. Benedict, pray that this evil be cast out of the Church.

St. Anthony, pray for us to find the way forward.

St. Paul, pray for the bishops that they may be fearless in confronting other bishops.

St. Augustine, pray for true repentance and transparency.

St. Dymphna, pray for consolation for the heartache, depression and anxiety this evil has caused.

Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.