

August 19, 2018

Dear Parishioners,

I am sure that you have seen the headlines this past week about the sex-abuse scandal in six dioceses of Pennsylvania. There was a cover-up involving over 300 priests and 1,000 victims of child sex abuse. The sheer number of perpetrators and victims is astounding. The abuse is recorded from the 1940's to the 2002's. The attorney general of the State of Pennsylvania reported on the cover-up of these cases for all these years. The bishops of these six dioceses hid these abominations for all these years. The worst part is that the statute of limitations prevents any of these victims to make a claim against the Church except for two of these victims in more recent times. Most of the priests involved are now dead.

There is a culture in the Church among many of the hierarchy that we need to protect the Church rather than protect the victims. This was more true a number of years ago than it is today. But there are still bishops and clergy who look to protect the church rather than the people of the church. It is a sad day that these things continue to happen. Things are getting better as far as education and training for clergy and all who work for the church as to what constitutes abuse and how we need to report any possibility of abuse of the young and elderly.

The Archdiocese of Seattle started seriously addressing these issues when the late Archbishop Hunthausen was the head of the archdiocese. Since then the archdiocese has seriously dealt with all known cases of abuse. There is a group of expert lay persons as well as archdiocesan personnel who regularly meet to deal with any new allegations that come to their attention. Most of the money to pay for these abuses has come from insurance policies and from the sale of property that has been donated to the archdiocese. The archdiocese published a list, two years ago, of all known predators connected to the church in this archdiocese. It was published in the news media for all to see.

Still there are cases like the one in Pennsylvania where things have not been so open. We will likely see, in the future, more cases like that. It is a sad and terrible time in the Church these days. Hopefully, the leadership in the Catholic Church will be more open in the future. The head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo has called for an apostolic visitation to lead a full investigation into questions still surrounding revelations of sexual abuse by former cardinal Archbishop Theodore McCarrick. As I write this, the Vatican says that the Holy See is treating the grand jury's report out of Pittsburg with "great seriousness."

They say the Church moves slowly. We see that is true. In this modern age we pray that the church might move forward with greater speed to rid the church of these sins. We pray for all victims of abuse and for the healing of the Church.

Sincerely,

Fr. Dick