

From Deacon Fred

Dear Friends,

The past couple weeks have once again brought to the forefront the issue of clergy abuse and the coverup of such in our Catholic Church. The Grand Jury Report from Pennsylvania and the resignation and removal of members of the hierarchy of the church have cast a pall over the hearts of many. Here at Saint Bernadette our leadership, priests, and staff have been deliberating as to how best to respond. This past weekend was a beginning. I am very grateful for Father Jim's willingness to present a homily that addressed the issue as he shared in part the statement issued by the President of the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. The statement of Cardinal DiNardo and future statements can be followed on the USCCB website www.usccb.org. There are other sources one can follow to be informed including the Jesuit magazine *America* <https://www.americamagazine.org>, the *National Catholic Reporter* <https://www.ncronline.org>, and *The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests* <http://www.uscatholicpriests.org> For those not familiar with The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, the association articulates and raises the compassionate and pastoral voice of their member priests. We also included this prayer in our Prayers of the Faithful:

For victims of abuse by Catholic clergy. May they receive the emotional and spiritual healing they need, redress that is appropriate, and accountability from those who enabled their suffering by their silence, we pray to the Lord.

I have been very impressed and grateful at how many of our parishioners have taken the time to be well informed. Some have even attempted to read the 887-page Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report. A word of caution: it can be an emotionally difficult read! These same parishioners have expressed an appreciation for Pope Francis' call for prayer and fasting. Yet, there are questions that naturally flow from the Pope's exhortation that "No effort must be spared." How does this apply locally? How do we deal with the history of pedophilia in the church? Pedophilia is an addiction. As with all addictions, there is no "cure"! The addict must struggle "One Day at a Time," striving to be vigilant and mindful over their addiction. Remembering this reality makes it imperative that as a community we too are vigilant and mindful to protect the innocent placed in our care.

The Holy Spirit is always at work. I have had the privilege to speak to two self-described "survivors" of abuse this week who, because of our openness and welcoming, have felt at home here at Saint Bernadette Parish. Their experience only amplifies the call to honor the vulnerability of victims and to lift up the voices of survivors. The stories of those who are in pain, anger, and sorrow are sacred. The stories of those who claim their Catholic identity despite the harm the Church has caused them are stories we all need to hear. They are stories of God's incredible grace.

We must continue to shine a light on the hideousness of this abuse and the coverup that has occurred, while also illuminating the ways that God walks with us even in the darkest of times. What this may look like in the future, time will tell. We know that we will continue to live compassion, reaching out to those who need us to be one with them as the Body of Christ. We will continue to ensure that staff, clergy, and volunteers who serve with and for us are screened and trained in prevention of and response to abuse. I pray that our relationship with the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, will continue to guide our efforts to bring light in darkness, and that we listen ever more closely to His voice above all.

Deacon Fred Passauer, Parish Administrator

Fr. John Schulmeister, Staff Friar

Dan Miller, Pastoral Associate

Pat Radford, Coordinator of Religious Education

Fr. Jim Donohue, Weekend Presider

Rena Black, Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Geoff Rohrbach, Director of Music Ministry