

A new heart I will give you, and a

NEW SPIRIT

I will put within you. Ez. 36:26a



YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE

The media is inundated these days with reports about the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. It is another reminder that, as an institution, our Church has a long road to travel to reconciliation and healing. The abuse issue has been before us for a long time now. Added to that we have the legacy of residential schools, marginalization of women, rejection and lack of respect for many different groups of people, including LGBT, those married outside the church, divorced, single parents and a host of others.

A recent study from the United States indicates that one of the largest religious groups in the country is people who have left the Catholic Church. A large majority of those say they left because of the abuse issue, especially the cover-up of abuse.

So where do we go from here? Some days I look at all the stories and wonder why I bother to remain. And yet, like the disciples in the Gospel today, I ask "Where would I go?" This is my home, my spiritual home. The institution and the hierarchy are not the whole church. It is the people who are the church, and this community is my home. We may not be perfect, we have our struggles but we continue to gather and seek to grow in our faith and live that faith as fully and well as possible. We can't ignore what is wrong in the institution, but we don't have to abandon our home because of it. We can continue to live out the Gospel in our particular community as best we can and seek to build the kingdom. We can continue to pray for conversion for those in leadership and call for action on their part to address the dysfunction. We can work for change within the local church and not just participate in but also encourage continued efforts to address the issues of clericalism and abuse and seek ways to enhance the protection of all people, especially the vulnerable. We can gather formally or informally to reflect on the issues and share our reactions, pain, hopes and dreams.

Encourage our bishops to continue the work they have been doing over the past thirty years to address the issues of abuse and clericalism. Not only do there need to be protocols to screen people in ministry; we also need clear and understandable guidelines and processes for when abuse is suspected or is reported. We must eliminate fear of coming forward to report abuse. We are people of prayer. Pray for the victims, for healing, for change in structures, for courage to respond in a loving and supportive way when we encounter someone who has been abused and pray that we will continue to find life in the words of Jesus who came to bring life.

-Richard Beaudette, OMI

Inside this issue:

Pope Francis' Letter to the Church	2
Harvest Family Fair	4



St. Joseph's Parish Harvest Family Fair

Sunday, October 14, 2018

12:00 - 5:00 PM

St. Joseph's Parish Hall

174 Wilbrod St.

A CORNUCOPIA OF FAMILY FUN!

- **Homemade Treats & Handcrafted Goods from local vendors**
 - **Appearances by local children's authors**
 - **Live Music**
 - **Food & Drink**
 - **Face Painting**
 - **Pumpkin Painting**
 - **Cakewalk**
 - **50/50 Raffle**
- ...AND MUCH MORE!**

* Food & Drink tickets available at the door. Family Rate available.



All donations and a portion of sales support our "Raise the Roof" fund.

**FREE
Admission &
Parking**

LETTER OF POPE FRANCIS TO THE CHURCH

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (*1 Cor* 12:26). These words of Saint Paul forcefully echo in my heart as I acknowledge once more the suffering endured by many minors due to sexual abuse, the abuse of power and the abuse of conscience perpetrated by a significant number of clerics and consecrated persons. Crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness, primarily among the victims, but also in their family members and in the larger community of believers and nonbelievers alike. Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated. The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and of vulnerable adults.

1. If one member suffers...

In recent days, a report was made public which detailed the experiences of at least a thousand survivors, victims of sexual abuse, the abuse of power and of conscience at the hands of priests over a period of approximately seventy years. Even though it can be said that most of these cases belong to the past, nonetheless as time goes on we have come to know the pain of many of the victims. We have realized that these wounds never disappear and that they require us forcefully to condemn these atrocities and join forces in uprooting this culture of death; these wounds never go away. The heart-wrenching pain of these victims, which cries out to heaven, was long ignored, kept quiet or silenced. But their outcry was more powerful than all the measures meant to silence it, or sought even to resolve it by decisions that increased its gravity by falling into complicity. The Lord heard that cry and once again showed us on which side He stands. Mary’s song is not mistaken and continues quietly to echo throughout history. For the Lord remembers the promise He made to our fathers: “He has scattered the proud in their conceit; He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly” (*Lk* 1:51-52). We feel shame when we realize that our style of life has denied, and continues to deny, the words we recite.

With shame and repentance, we acknowledge as an ecclesial community that we were not where we should have been, that we did not act in a timely manner, realizing the magnitude and the gravity of the damage done to so many lives. We showed no care for the little ones; we abandoned them. I make my own the words of

the then Cardinal Ratzinger when, during the Way of the Cross composed for Good Friday 2005, he identified with the cry of pain of so many victims and exclaimed: “How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to [Christ]! How much pride, how much self-complacency! Christ’s betrayal by His disciples, their unworthy reception of His body and blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces His heart. (cf. *Mt* 8:25)” (Ninth Station).

2. ... all suffer together with it

The extent and the gravity of all that has happened requires coming to grips with this reality in a comprehensive and communal way. While it is important and necessary on every journey of conversion to acknowledge the truth of what has happened, in itself this is not enough. Today we are challenged as the People of God to take on the pain of our brothers and sisters wounded in their flesh and in their spirit. If, in the past, the response was one of omission, today we want solidarity, in the deepest and most challenging sense, to become our way of forging present and future history. Such solidarity demands that we in turn condemn whatever endangers the integrity of any person. A solidarity that summons us to fight all forms of corruption, especially spiritual corruption. The latter is “a comfortable and self-satisfied form of blindness. Everything then appears acceptable: deception, slander, egotism and other subtle forms of self-centeredness, for “even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (*2 Cor* 11:14)” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 165). Saint Paul’s exhortation to suffer with those who suffer is the best antidote against all our attempts to repeat the words of Cain: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (*Gen* 4:9). I am conscious of the effort and work being carried out in various parts of the world to come up with the necessary means to ensure the safety and protection of the integrity of children and of vulnerable adults, as well as implementing zero tolerance and ways of making all those who perpetrate or cover up these crimes accountable. We have delayed in applying these actions and sanctions that are so necessary, yet I am confident that they will help to guarantee a greater culture of care in the present and future.

Together with those efforts, every one of the baptized should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need. This change calls for a personal and communal conversion that makes us see things as the Lord does. For as Saint John Paul II liked to say: “If we have truly started out anew from the contemplation of

Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he wished to be identified” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 49). To see things as the Lord does, to be where the Lord wants us to be, to experience a conversion of heart in his presence. To do so, prayer and penance will help. I invite the entire holy faithful People of God to a *penitential exercise of prayer and fasting*, following the Lord’s command. This can awaken our conscience and arouse our solidarity and commitment to a culture of care that says “never again” to every form of abuse.

It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God’s People. Indeed, whenever we have tried to replace, or silence, or ignore, or reduce the People of God to small elites, we end up creating communities, projects, theological approaches, spiritualities and structures without roots, without memory, without faces, without bodies and ultimately, without lives. This is clearly seen in a peculiar way of understanding the Church’s authority, one common in many communities where sexual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience have occurred. Such is the case with clericalism, an approach that “not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of our people”. Clericalism, whether fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons, leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say “no” to abuse is to say an emphatic “no” to all forms of clericalism.

It is always helpful to remember that “in salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to Himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in the human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 6). Consequently, the only way that we have to respond to this evil that has darkened so many lives is to experience it as a task regarding all of us as the People of God. This awareness of being part of a people and a shared history will enable us to acknowledge our past sins and mistakes with a penitential openness that can allow us to be renewed from within. Without the active participation of all the Church’s members, everything being done to uproot the culture of abuse in our communities will not be successful in generating the necessary dynamics for sound and realistic change. The penitential dimension of fasting and prayer will help us as God’s People to come

before the Lord and our wounded brothers and sisters as sinners imploring forgiveness and the grace of shame and conversion. In this way, we will come up with actions that can generate resources attuned to the Gospel. For “whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 11). It is essential that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable. Let us beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others. An awareness of sin helps us to acknowledge the errors, the crimes and the wounds caused in the past and allows us, in the present, to be more open and committed along a journey of renewed conversion. Likewise, penance and prayer will help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people’s sufferings and to overcome the thirst for power and possessions that are so often the root of those evils. May fasting and prayer open our ears to the hushed pain felt by children, young people and the disabled. A fasting that can make us hunger and thirst for justice and impel us to walk in the truth, supporting all the judicial measures that may be necessary. A fasting that shakes us up and leads us to be committed in truth and charity with all men and women of good will, and with society in general, to combating all forms of the abuse of power, sexual abuse and the abuse of conscience. In this way, we can show clearly our calling to be “a sign and instrument of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race” (*Lumen Gentium*, 1). “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it”, said Saint Paul. By an attitude of prayer and penance, we will become attuned as individuals and as a community to this exhortation, so that we may grow in the gift of compassion, in justice, prevention and reparation. Mary chose to stand at the foot of her Son’s cross. She did so unhesitatingly, standing firmly by Jesus’ side. In this way, she reveals the way she lived her entire life. When we experience the desolation caused by these ecclesial wounds, we will do well, with Mary, “to insist more upon prayer”, seeking to grow all the more in love and fidelity to the Church (SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, *Spiritual Exercises*, 319). She, the first of the disciples, teaches all of us as disciples how we are to halt before the sufferings of the innocent, without excuses or cowardice. To look to Mary is to discover the model of a true follower of Christ. May the Holy Spirit grant us the grace of conversion and the interior anointing needed to express before these crimes of abuse our compunction and our resolve courageously to combat them.