

## **Statement Regarding Priest Sexual Abuse**

(Given during Homily on August 19, 2018)

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Most Holy Trinity

Recently the Attorney General of Pennsylvania gave us a report after a two year investigation of over 70 years old and settled cases involving priest sexual abuse and how the cases were handled and covered up even by some bishops. I am sure you have seen this in the news. It is shameful. What was reported is unspeakable and to read the reports will bring anyone down into the dumps. You can see headlines such as the Catholic Church has no morality etc. I am glad that these things have come to the light and will keep coming to light and I really do hope heads will roll. Jesus himself says that whoever causes one of these little ones to sin (scandal) will have a millstone tied around his neck and thrown into the ocean. I am comforted to know that Jesus will judge those who have done these things to his little ones. I feel for the victims of abuse even if it happened a long time ago. I pray for them. It is horrible.

Scandal is a horrible thing. We have to be one of the little ones and not allow these scandals to make us sin, to leave our faith. We have to be strong in the face of this evil. We need to be close to Mary, the perfect image of the holiness of the Church and remember the Saints, thousands of saints. Many saints became holy despite persecution even from Church leaders. I think of Joan of Arc and Padre Pio.

The Church has always had false brothers in its midst. St. Paul writes that we are to beware of false brothers who use the name of Christian (Galatians 2:4). These priests should have never been ordained. They are false brothers and the devil uses them to bring shame on the priesthood of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus' priesthood.

In the times of St. Augustine in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century there was a question of sinful priests and whether or not a priest in the state of mortal sin could consecrate a valid Eucharist. People were saying that no they couldn't. These became known as Donatism. Donatists argued that Christian clergy must be faultless for their ministry to be effective and their prayers and sacraments to be valid. A heresy that means that only the most holy can be our leaders.

While our leaders should be holy, and Jesus expects great holiness from priests and bishops, their ordination and sacramental seal on their soul is not erased when they are in mortal sin. They still can validly celebrate Mass and the people really do receive Jesus. The priest who celebrates Mass and receives communion in Mortal sin commits a sin of a sacrilegious communion. I am sure a priest who preaches in this state can do nothing good but the Eucharist still is Jesus. Jesus is still feeding his flock.

Jesus compares the Church to a net that is dragged in the sea and picks up fish of every kind and men separate good fish from the bad. (So it will be at the end of the age the angels will

separate the evil from the righteous) Also there is the parable of the weeds and the wheat. An enemy sows seed at night and weeds spout up. God will separate the weeds from the wheat. There are weeds in a Church of 1.2 Billion people. Most priests and bishops are good and sincere. But these findings show that the Church needs reform.

The new seminarians and priests are largely holy and living celibacy in a joyful way. I myself am witness to this. Celibacy means we give our whole heart, all of our love to God and to serve the Church to protect God's people. I am proud still to be a priest because I believe in the priesthood of Jesus Christ and I will not allow the devil and these men who have been enslaved to him to tarnish my faith in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Grace builds on nature and if the nature of a man is bad, sick, just receiving Holy Orders does not make one a saint.

We say in the Creed, "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." The Church that it is founded by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit is an object of faith. Today it really takes faith. Just like Jesus a man looks nothing like God, we believe He is God and just as in the piece of bread it looks nothing like a man, we believe the host truly is Jesus' body, blood, soul, and divinity.

To see the Church with all of its sinners and to believe that this is still the Church Jesus founded takes faith. Even with all the darkness we see its excellence in doctrine, its Universality, its unity, apostolicity, and its Sacraments, yes though there is darkness the light is stronger.

Let us be the light. Let us pray, spend time in Eucharistic Adoration. In the Gospel Jesus says He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in Him. Let us bask in the Eucharist. Adore Him. Receive Him with faith. Now is the time for saints to rise up. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus We must not give into discouragement. "The light has come into the world and the darkness has not overcome it." I know that God will bring a greater good out of this and even the way our bishops lead us will be better. Now is a moment of great opportunity and hope since now bishops will be more accountable. Cardinal DiNardo recently revealed the plan to address this issue. I will have it available to you. Let us pray for our Bishop and for the Pope that God give them strength and wisdom to act and bring justice. And we pray for graces and healing for all who have suffered abuse.