



August 17, 2018

Last weekend at all Masses, I spoke about the sexual abuse of children by priests in light of the Grand Jury report from Pennsylvania. While it is a painful and difficult subject to address, I hope that you feel welcome to voice your anger, sadness, fear, and distress to me or any of our clergy or staff. Let us know how we can respond and provide care for those who have been violated and their families.

Our Universal church belongs to everyone—let no priest, bishop, deacon or leader in that institution take it away from you. The apostles of Jesus began this church with an incredible force in the Holy Spirit, and they had fire. They brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world at great cost. As it grew, that struggle called for structure and organization. Unfortunately, the institution—built of people—has overshadowed the message. The horrific acts of some of our pastoral leaders against the most vulnerable is shameful, harmful, and wrong.

We must return to the original message of Jesus: love. These crimes and the accompanying neglect are a stark reminder of that sacred message and that it is ours to keep. Let us all be a part of the purification of our Church and ourselves. That can only happen if we stand together, weather the storm, provide comfort and consolation, ask forgiveness and remain vigilant. God’s mercy is limitless and unconditional.

Archbishop José Gomez also wrote a statement and copies are available at the Welcome Table after Mass. He writes, “Renewal of the Church is...a duty for bishops and priests. We need humble penance for what has been done by our brothers.” I accept this and hope to fulfill it. Gomez asks, “do not lose hope in the Church...our Lord is counting on us. Put your hope in God’s promise: where sin increases, his grace will increase even more.”

This week, we also heard from our Holy Father, Pope Francis and copies are available as well. His candid tone is strong—he does not diminish or dismiss the severity of these sins and admits, “no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient.” Pope Francis writes, “change requires the active participation of all the members of God’s people.” He continues, “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 encourage you to read and experience the entirety of our Pope’s powerful statement.

To remind, renew and reaffirm our commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, you can find information and resources on our website: stmonica.net/safeguard as well as links to the letter from Archbishop Gomez and Pope Francis.

My prayer and love to you today!



Msgr. Lloyd Torgerson