



ST. MARK Catholic Church

called by Christ to Worship God, to Invite all with love, to Nurture our faith, and to Serve others

September 1, 2018

Dear *ST. MARK* Parishioners -

I hope that this finds you well – and may this be a good day for you!
I am writing to you at the encouragement of the Parish Staff, as to the comments I made at the Sunday Masses these past two week-ends. The Staff's concern, based on questions from various parishioners, is that you be aware of what was offered to you in these comments. They, unfortunately, follow the report from the Pennsylvania Grand Jury on Clerical Sex Abuse of Minors, as well as the news accounts about Cardinal Theodore McCarrick.

First of all, I thanked everyone who was at Mass for being here. With this report and these accounts, the questions are arising, “why should I go to Mass; why should I be part of this church; why should I believe in God?” With the documenting of sex abuse crimes and, certainly with horror, the covering-up by the bishops – even the reassignment of the perpetrating priests – the thought of associating with this institution feels unacceptable. The anger, even the rage, that results is so great as to make any of us say that this is wrong, that this is done, that this is finished!

And I agree! I am angry! I am in rage that those chosen to lead us have chosen the institution over us – and especially over children. How can I ask you to be here, when the very things the church preaches are not followed by the very ones preaching? And how can I, the visible and personal representative of the institution to you, and of its leaders, possibly help you to deal with such anger and such questions?

It is understandable that I cannot – except to say, as did the Gospel two weeks ago, in the words of St. Peter, “to whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life”. Except to turn to the Lord, which and who are why we are here in church at all! As human beings, we seek and need and use direction, and guidance, and even institutions, to help us in our lives. But more important than the institution is the Lord. We ask, we pray, that the institution help is to the Lord, for it is the Lord through whom and in whom we have our faith. Without the Lord, the human nature takes the lead, with its intellect, with its logic, with its methods, all of which can be misguided, and misplaced, and corrupted, and corrupting, even for supposedly good reasons. For a supposedly good reason, to protect the institution, the bishops overlooked the children. And evil resulted! Please do not let evil win. We should rally together against a threat from the outside of the church. But to have evil come from inside, even from our leaders, and especially against our children, brings the natural response of leaving the church. But as flawed as the church is, as much evil can invade the church, the Lord is still here, the Bread of Life, the words of eternal life, and in the faith-filled people who can help us rise above the evil.

Please turn to the Lord. Tell the Lord you are angry. Get the anger out, so that it does not fester, and grow in bitterness, and destroy you. Get it out, so the Lord can get in with grace and blessing, and please God, someday a return of hope and trust in the church. Please pray for priests and bishops, and seminarians, to be of faith, to be of true faith, to be of strong faith in the Lord. Please pray for yourself to be of faith, to be of confident faith in the Lord. Please pray for the children, that they find healing, and safety, and witness of God's love for each of them. Please turn to the Lord.

And may you be assured of the Lord's
blessings, to you always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Father Patrick Holroyd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Father Patrick Holroyd
Pastor