

August 16, 2018

My Dear Parishioners:

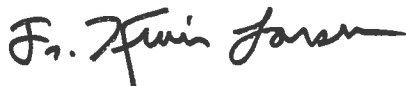
This week, and over the last several weeks, there have been reports and articles concerning the scandalous actions of the former Cardinal, Archbishop McCarrick; and the release of a grand jury report on the various Dioceses in Pennsylvania, which chronicles a painful history of sexual abuse by some clergy, and this has called into question decisions made by various Bishops and Diocesan administrations. What can one say in the face of these...and other past, and likely future, reports concerning such scandal within the Church in our Country, and elsewhere in the World? Thoughts and words of anger, pain, shame, sadness all seem somewhat inadequate.... yet are also more than appropriate in the face of such scandalous and sinful behavior and actions.

There is an obvious and open wound in the Church, both in our Country and all over the World: an ongoing tragedy for the many victims, for the Church itself (the Living Body of Christ) which has been greatly harmed by the actions, and inaction, of some of its shepherds (Deacons, Priests, and Bishops). How are we to respond? What are we to do in the face of all of this? Many may see all this unfolding sinfulness and scandal as a reason to leave the Catholic Church, indeed some have already left: but I say we should not allow the weakness and sinfulness of some members, and leaders, of the Church to drive us away, this is exactly what the Evil One desires! We should not allow further injury to the Body of Christ to occur by separating ourselves from the Sacraments, which are actions of God coming through the Church (albeit through imperfect instruments) ...leaving the Church is not likely to bring any further peace of mind or resolution. Rather than walk away... remain... pray...work...challenge...help the Church's shepherds to learn from their sinfulness and mistakes and to renew the reality of integrity, honesty and holiness that they are called to live and share!

We need to continue to pray for the victims of abuse...for their healing. We need to be all the more vigilant in protecting and guiding young people...supporting and promoting present, and future, programs and protocols that serve to form and train those who work with children. We need to pray for responsible and holy Shepherds...and to promote and actualize greater wisdom, compassion and accountability on the part of our Bishops and Diocesan administrations as they exercise their ministry of governance.

While the Church has taken many positive steps, over the last 15-16 years, to address the scandals of sexual abuse: which include required criminal back-ground checks, mandatory child protection programs and protocols, lay-review boards, and the like; there are, without doubt, still many more actions to be taken with regard to further promoting justice and healing for victims, and to obtain accountability from our shepherds: may the Holy Spirit help us in this work of healing, reconciliation and renewal.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Kevin Larsen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Kevin Larsen