

After the release of the Grand Jury Report this past Tuesday, I am **horrified** at what the victim-survivors of abuse had to ~~experience~~ *Suffer* and how it has **haunted** and **scarred** them for years and years throughout their lives.

I am **angry** and I am **frustrated**.

Angry at how poorly church leaders have **dealt** with this problem for so many decades.

Frustrated that though **good** people working hard have made huge strides in the protection of minors over the past 15 years in the US Catholic Church, we still periodically have to **deal** with the **horrific** details of abuse that for the most part happened before 2002.

And I know that all of you are likewise **horrified, angry** and **frustrated** ~~too~~. *AS WELL.*

First, last and always, we must pray for the victim-survivors. It was obvious that for many who were on stage ^{LAST} ~~on~~ Tuesday, the **fact** that their **suffering** was at last **recognized** and somehow **validated**, **seemed** to be a **step** in the **healing** process for them.

I hope that is true for the many who were not on

The report is online. The main part is nearly 900 pages long with over 400 pages of appendix. I can tell you that reading just a **few** pages can be **nauseating** and **disgusting**.

It's **terrible** what was done to these people in their youth and how it has **affected** them **psychologically** and **emotionally** for the rest of their lives.

AND SCANDALOUS

Especially discouraging is the **cover-up** by bishops and church leaders. The **cover-up** allowed this human suffering not only to **continue** but also to multiply.

Again, we need to pray for the **continued** **healing** and **consolation** of all of those directly affected by this blight.

stage as well.

And there has been a lot of collateral damage as well. Hundreds of thousands of sincere and hard-working priests, deacons, nuns, teachers, lay ministers and even volunteers have been tarred by the same brush – viewed with suspicion and mistrust by many both in the wider society and within the church itself.

I think also of the many people whose connection with the Catholic Church is extremely delicate and fragile.

People who identify as Catholic but for whatever reason feel only a very tenuous, fleeting or occasional link with the Church. People I feel especially
This kind of scandal can be the straw that breaks the camel's back – the thing that makes such a person decide that they no longer need to

BE LONG TO
be bothered with a Church that treats people so badly...
...that it might not be a safe place for them for their family.

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I think also of the young men and women who may feel drawn to the priesthood or consecrated life as a sister or brother or friar. I know of young men who have expressed interest in the priesthood only to be strongly discouraged by family and close friends telling them the atrocious horror stories of what predator priests have perpetrated.

so All of this can have an effect on vocations as well.

What is to be done? How can this time be different?

I believe the Church needs reform. More laity (especially women) should be enlisted to help assess, evaluate and reform structures that have allowed these tragic situations to exist and continue.

Now, the reason I stand here every Sunday morning is to preach the Gospel – to give you the Good News. I haven't done that for you today.

Well here's the Good News:
Jesus still loves us.

So far all I've spoken of was bad news. (so far)

Even in our justified anger and frustration, Jesus is still with us.

Jesus is calling you and me to intimacy with him,
to feed us, to nourish us,
to share with us His Very Life force – His Grace and His Love.
He says to us today:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my **flesh** for the life of the world."

Scripture shows us time and again
that God can **and does** make good out of evil,
bring light out of darkness.

My hope is that in this **dark time**,
God will help us to become a more loving, a **more faithful** church.
We need to work hard and to pray hard –
for the victim-survivors and for the church!

And I say it to you again:

First, last and always, we must pray for the victim-survivors. *for their healing*
the next two Sundays *for their peace.*

I invite you to offer Masses with me for the Victims of Abuse *NEXT* on Sunday,
~~August 26~~ at 9:30 AM and on Sunday, September 2 at 11:15 AM.
Please pray for them in your daily prayers and rosaries as well.

Pray for all of us.