

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2018

I'd love to speak about the Eucharist tonight/today but, yet again, I have to speak about the scandal of sexual abuse by some clergy members. I am beginning to understand that this is never going to go away. It doesn't go away for the victims; why should it go away for the Church? There can be healing, there can even be forgiveness (in time), but only if it is dealt with well, and it has clearly not been dealt with.

Several weeks ago, the New York Times wrote an article concerning Cardinal McCarrick. It was very graphic and very disturbing, to say the least. I said to myself, this is only the tip of the iceberg. We will hear about more cardinals, more bishops, more priests, and more abuse in seminaries; we should be prepared for that. Last week we did hear about 301 abusive priests in Pennsylvania and incriminating evidence concerning Cardinal Wuerl's complicity in that abuse. The fact that most of those priests are deceased and most of this abuse happened sixty years ago doesn't matter. What matters is that it happened. And maybe those cardinals and bishops did what they thought was the right thing to do at that time, but that also doesn't matter. What matters is that the Church comes clean. No more hidden files, no more hidden stories because everything that is hidden will be revealed, and every time this issue arises it reopens the wound and causes more pain. I think part of

the answer is that the Church come clean. Then maybe we can begin the healing process. That has to be done by the hierarchy, of which I'm not a part. I stand with you.

So what do we do? People ask me why I stay in the priesthood. I'm sure people probably ask you why you stay in the Church. I don't know what your answer is to that question, but I do know mine. I stay because the Holy Spirit is more powerful than the hierarchy of the Church; I stay because I love the sacraments; and I stay because of you. The people of God (you) are good and holy, and I love you. I've searched my heart and my soul and those are the only reasons why I stay, and they are good reasons.

I pray that the hierarchical Church gets their stuff together, but I don't have faith in them. I have faith in Christ. I fear that for too long we have placed too much faith in the Church and the priesthood and not enough faith in God. I believe that is where we have to begin. I'm not leaving; I'm fighting for what I believe in, and I invite you to fight with me. Our faith is worth fighting for!