



METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA

Ukrainian Catholic
810 North Franklin Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123-2005
Phone (215) 627-0143 Fax (215) 627-0377
vicargeneral@ukrcap.org

No. 412/2018 O

This Number Should be Prefixed to Your Reply

Most Reverend Andriy Rabiy
Apostolic Administrator

October 10, 2018

Letter to the People of God, Clergy and Religious of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia

*Sin directs the heart of the wicked man;
his eyes are closed to the fear of God.
For he lives with the delusion:
his guilt will not be known and hated.
Empty and false are the words of his mouth;
he has ceased to be wise and do good.
On his bed he hatches plots;
he sets out on a wicked way;
he does not reject evil.*

Psalms 36:2-5

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our loving Lord, Jesus Christ,

Слава Ісусу Христу!

We have all read or heard in the media about the Grand Jury Report of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. For those who have read it, it is an understatement that it is difficult to read. It is, to say the least, an embarrassment to read what was done and perpetuated against the victims by the Catholic Church, which, by Her nature is to bring comfort, joy and salvation rather than pain, abuse and trauma.

Many justly wonder how did we get that far to not care when innocent people were exploited? The report shows us that the number of abuse cases was underreported and minimized. What is even worse is that some bishops of the Church attempted to shield themselves against any blame, to keep scandal at arm's length and to protect themselves from any criminal or civil litigation. That is the truth of the matter.

Some attempt to explain why this happened, what should have been done, even trying to put a cultural or epochal spin on it. Wrong! The bottom line is, ***it never should have happened!***

Nonetheless, it did happen and was widespread like a cancer or virus. Do people sin? Yes. Do people make mistakes? Yes. This issue of sex abuse goes deeper than that. The sex abuse that occurred is as the Psalmist said, *Sin directs the heart of the wicked man; his eyes are closed to the fear of God. For he lives with the delusion: his guilt will not be known and hated.*

This surely is the crux of the matter which faced the Church back then and faces the Church today. The Church has two natures just like our Lord, Jesus Christ. There is the human nature that involves the day to day interaction of human lives which the Church has been commissioned to bring to salvation. This nature is what failed the People of God. Instead of living a life directed to do the Will of God, those in positions of authority took it upon themselves to perpetuate the abuse rather than seek to root out the evil that it is.

The other nature, the Divine Nature, was pushed aside if you will, so those who were abused may not attain justice, may not find hope, and may not find healing in the Healer of all.

*Wait a little, and the wicked will be no more;
look for them and they will not be there.
But the poor will inherit the earth,
will delight in prosperity.
The wicked plot against the righteous
and gnash their teeth at them;
But the Lord laughs at them
because He sees that their day is coming.
Psalm 37:10-13*

It is this Divine Nature of the Church that we look to, to seek and to hold onto so we may have hope. The injustice suffered by so many cries out to the Lord for justice, reparation and for healing. In spite of our human nature, God is there, first weeping that His dear children are in such agony. Only God can understand what they are going through. Second, God is willing to comfort those who were abused and us who are trying to understand why this happened. As difficult as it may seem, God wants to embrace us, to heal us and to cry with us. It is understandable that some may not trust God now because of what successors of His Apostles (Bishops) and clergy imposed upon them and us.

It is not God Who has done this. It is the men who, as wolves in sheep clothing, preyed upon those whom God loves. If anything, God is justly angry. So, if God can be angry, we have every right to be angry also.

The Church in the United States and, in particular, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has undertaken significant measures to insure the past not be repeated again. The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference is working diligently to provide for victims and to assist the Dioceses and Archeparchies so they are vigilant in meeting the needs of the faithful who have suffered. Amidst the Grand Jury Report, the Church is different today than it was in the recent past. Procedures will be in place to hold Bishops accountable to the same level as everyone else under the civil and church (canon) law, which was not present in the past. Cooperation with evil will not be tolerated again.

Concerning our Archeparchy of Philadelphia, we, to this date have not had an incident or allegation made against our clergy. This is not to be proud that we are better than others. It is a time to reflect and to be grateful. Have incidents of abuse occurred? Maybe. If so, we encourage that person or you, if you are a victim, to step forward so we may correct the wrong one may have suffered.

Our Archeparchy is just as human as the next Eparchy, Archdiocese or Diocese. We strive and promise to be that Divine Nature that seeks to help the abused be whole. This would involve us crying with the person, hearing the person, seeking their healing and be Jesus Christ so they may know they are loved as Our Lord loves them.

This also would involve us to weed out the evil in our midst. There is no excuse to let someone abuse another and to let that continue with others if the abuser is moved. This will not happen in the Archeparchy of Philadelphia!

At this time, I ask that all remember that the Church belongs to Jesus Christ. It is His and even though we have failed miserably, may we return to Him and be with Him, just as the Apostle Peter did. Humans fail, Jesus Christ does not. If we, especially the Hierarchy and clergy, turn our will to Him, we will see blessings that we have not been able to see or do on our own.

*May those who seek to destroy my life
be shamed and confounded.
Turn back in disgrace
those who desire my ruin.
Let those who say to me "Aha!"
Be made desolate on account of their shame.
While those who seek You
rejoice and be glad in You.
May those who long for Your salvation
always say, "The Lord is great."
Though I am afflicted and poor,
my Lord keeps me in mind.
You are my help and deliverer;
my God, do not delay!*
Psalm 40:15-18

I ask for everyone's prayers for our Archeparchy and the Church as a whole. May we continue to be vigilant so no one may be abused or hurt in any manner. May we respond properly in cooperation with Our Lord. May we help those desperate for the justice, support and love they so deserve.

+ Andriy Rabiw

+Andriy Rabiw
Apostolic Administrator for the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia

AP/oak