

This weekend Bishop Quinn has placed in the bulletin a letter to all his flock “painfully acknowledge(ing) the past sexual abuse of children by members of our diocesan clergy”. He mentions that 121 claims have been lodged against the Diocese and that the perpetrators are either dead or no longer function in **ANY** priestly capacity.

Going forward, he acknowledges that there must be “just and equitable compensation for the victims”, the amount of which is unknown at this time. After much prayer, and following the consultation of his various boards and committees, he’s accepted the recommendation that the Diocese file for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy in order that victims may be compensated and the **GOOD** works within the diocese may continue uninterrupted.

We are but **ONE** diocese across this country who finds itself in such a precarious situation, brought on by the sins of clericalism – the misuse or overextension of the clergy's authority; the flaunting of power over others – and the acting out of homosexual tendencies for self-gratification. Yet, the worst of the sins committed would be that of **ARROGANCE** by those in leadership positions, bishops and cardinals alike, who had ample warning when signing checks or handing over cash to victims for their silence, that the better and more appropriate course of action would have been to remove the infection before it spread, not play hide and seek with it. Unfortunately, that course of action wasn’t very popular, especially amongst friends.

For the Church universal, not only in this country but around the world, this is a time likened to that described in the Book of Daniel today, “a time unsurpassed in distress since the nations began.” This is maybe for us today, in **OUR** lifetime, the worst we have seen, at least as it concerns the matters within the Church. Yet, speaking to the Jews of his time, Daniel insists that there is hope, a “great prince, guardian of the people”, one to come to raise the people out of their abysmal pain, and shame. **We** know this prince to be the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Mary. For those who have done good shall live forever, but for those who have lived falsely to the will of God “shall be in everlasting horror and disgrace.”

In St Paul's Letter to the Hebrews we get a quick insight into how the Jews attained reparation for sins, through the daily prayers and sacrifices offered by the priests. These sacrifices were blood offerings using the blood of animals as called for in the Law. Paul reminds us that it is the blood of Jesus that was spilled for the sins of all mankind, a perfect sacrifice of a perfect victim, **MOST** holy and pleasing to God, and that God is quick to forgive and forget the sins of those who repent of mind and heart.

From Mark's Gospel today we might draw a comparison, that these days in the Church today are days of tribulation, that the hearts and souls of church leaders have gone dark, and those whom should be held in high esteem have fallen from grace. Yet these, like us, are mere mortals, men with flaws, sinners, just like us.

And if we pay attention to the signs around us, as Jesus suggests, we know what's happening and what will come next. When the trees start to bud, we know summer is near, and when the rain turns big, fluffy, and white we know to break out the shovels and winter clothes. And when we see something that is not right, we shine a light on it and bring it out into the open to see how it might be corrected.

When will the problems that plague the Church be fixed? When will this era of confusion be settled? In time, in its own time. Even Jesus could not tell his disciples when **he** would come again. No one has the answer, not "the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." So, what are we to do until the time comes? Pray! Pray like your immortal soul depends on it. And seek the Will of God for yourself. Ask Him in prayer what more He wants of you.

"Be watchful! Be Alert!" "What I say to you, I say to all: '**WATCH!**'", "and pray that **you** have the strength to stand before the Son of Man."