



St. John the Baptist Parish † St. Albert the Great Parish † St. Mary Queen of Heaven
16680 Main Street • PO Box 329
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STATEMENT FROM FR. JEFF, YOUR PASTOR

The horrific news out of Pennsylvania, as well as the echoes from what happened in our own Diocese, are sickening, saddening and frustrating. The enormity and the depravity of what was done to the innocent, and the intentional coverup, demand a response. We cannot remain silent.

Above all, I find myself appalled and angry. I am appalled and angry that so many have been greatly harmed by those who were called to be trusted. I am appalled and angry that some in the church valued the reputation of the church over the safety and protection of children. I am appalled and angry, disappointed and sickened.

I am deeply grieved by the harm done to the innocent and pray for forgiveness.

You may be appalled and angry too. You may be so upset that you are considering walking away from the Church. I get this, I do. And I pray that you don't. Don't leave. Lead! We, the Church, need you. If you want to talk, I am here.

If you are hurting, angry, and not sure how to respond to this crisis in the church, please consider joining us in prayer and fasting. Fr. Cody and I invite you to join us in fasting and prayer on the Fridays of September. Join us according to your ability. Try fasting with two small meals and one main meal, limit screen time, or give up desserts. In September, we will offer the Monday Mass at St. Mary, Queen of Heaven in acknowledgement and reparation for the sin of abuse and coverup. And most of all, pray. We seek healing for all. We encourage you to read Pope Francis' letter *To All The People of God*. The link to the letter is on our parish website.

We cannot allow anyone, however important or eminent their position, to get in the way of our faith in Christ. We cannot base our faith on any human being. To base your faith on anyone other than Christ will only bring disappointment. Christ alone is our salvation, Christ alone is our foundation. Christ suffers with us.

First and foremost, we pledge our prayers and support for the victims of child abuse and their families. We renew our commitment to maintain the highest possible standards of safety for all, especially children. We humbly ask you, despite everything that has been revealed and anything to come, to continue to stand with us in that shared mission to bring Christ's light and love to the world. Together, we are church. Together, we can make a difference.