



# *Most Holy Trinity Parish*

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An Arizona Non-profit Corporation

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Dear Friends,

Last week we have once again had to confront the horror of child abuse by priests in the church. Last week a special grand jury in the state of Pennsylvania produced a damning 1000-page report on child abuse in the church that started in the 1940s. The pain and cruelty of it is hard for me as a priest to comprehend. However, the last thing I can do is be silent when such injustice takes place.

When such abuse and coverups take place, it can assault our faith in God and especially in our church institutions where the perpetrators and some leaders see the reputation of the institution as more important than the safety of the child. As far as I am concerned this is a horrendous sin that seriously needs to be dealt with from the highest levels of church and civil authority. There are many reasons why this has happened and through the years we have had one scandal after another. This is the latest and most severe of the scandals that I have seen.

In spite of the pain we are going through I have watched as many dioceses have worked hard to honestly deal with this crisis. I believe that our diocese, under the leadership of Bishop Kicanas, and now Bishop Edward has led the way in this effort to be transparent and to transform the diocese for the better. When Bishop Kicanas first arrived, he had to deal with our own scandal in Tucson and deal with it he did. Working with the suffering victims, government, schools, health institutions and parishes, he developed a plan to make sure, to the best of our ability, that this would never happen again. Since that time a serious and strict system of accountability has been developed in which we as a parish participate.

In our parish, we work hand-in-hand with the diocese to make sure we have an extremely safe environment for all our children and vulnerable adults. Everyone who volunteers are subject to background checks to make sure that our kids will be safe in their care. This evaluation includes our staff and it also includes me, Fr. John and Br Jeff. No one is exempt from this evaluation. Nothing is more important to me than the safety and happiness of the children who are entrusted to our care. Some people complain that we are too strict and it takes too long. However, for the safety of the children of our parish I make no apology. Sadly, there are people in our world who could still pose a threat to our children.

As Catholics we are struggling through a terrible time of scandal and pain that is challenging us at the very core of our faith. In response to this crisis we need to hold our religious leaders accountable and support those who are doing the right thing to protect children. We cannot be silent when so much hurt has been inflicted. Demanding accountability is the Christian thing to do. Letting our bishop and Papal Nuncio know of our concerns is important. Making sure that there is transparency, that our laws work for the safety of children is vitally important. Ultimately justice must be served.

Along with action we must pray and support each other. Our faith in Jesus is a faith based on love and respect and when that love and respect is violated we need to do the honest soul searching that is necessary to correct this crime. First of all we must pray for the victims who have suffered so grievously from this terrible assault. We need to pray for this church that she will finally realize that true and faithful actions must take place. I also hope you will pray for me, Fr. John and all the other good priests and leaders who are working hard to protect the children and vulnerable adults who are in our care so that we can truly be the community of hope that Jesus calls us to be. With actions, support and prayer we can move forward from this crisis and be the best that God is calling us to be. If you would like to talk about this with me or Fr. John, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to serve.

Yours in the Savior,

Fr. Tom