Sunday August 19th, 2018

My dear friends in Christ:

I write this letter to you today with sadness and anger. The revelations of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury and its lengthy investigation into the past priest/bishop sex abuse scandal and cover up is evil. Revelations about Archbishop McCarrick, the former Cardinal, are equally disturbing. It is painful to see this world wide scandal continue to be in the news nearly every day.

Our first concern needs to be the wellbeing of the victims. Every time a new story comes to light, the suffering of the victims is inflamed once more. We cannot comprehend the damage done to so many people as a result of the sex abuse scandal. Please pray for the victims as they endure this current wave of more bad news. Please pray for the victims so they may experience healing. Please pray for those victims who are searching for the strength to come forward and share their story. Probably at this very moment, a person is reading this who is a victim of sexual abuse. This is not your fault. You are innocent. The abuser is 100 percent at fault. We need to do whatever is necessary to help victims to heal. Although I am not a trained counselor, I am ready and willing to listen to your story and do what I can.

To the people in the pews and those who have left the practice of the faith, I am sure you are tired of the tightly worded statements that sound like they came from a public relations firm. There are no words that can be said to make things right. I am sure that many people find it very difficult to hear and accept the preaching from us as priests when it is obvious that there are priests out there who have not lived out the call to holiness as they promised. It must be even more difficult when the bishops, that is the shepherds, failed to lead.

Please pray for healing in the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Please pray that evil is purged from the Church. And, pray that we the clergy, clean up the filth in the clergy. Above all pray for the victims.

Yours in Christ:
Fr Ron Haft