



Holy Family Parish  
29 Sugarloaf St.  
South Deerfield, MA 01373

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21 November 2020

Dear Friends,

*Firmum est Cor Meum ... My Heart is Steadfast*

As we enter this season of Advent, I wanted to take a moment to address our entire parish on matters that have been circulating in the Church for some time. These matters include the Velis Report that was published several months ago per the leadership of Archbishop Rozanski. Recently, along these lines, the Vatican also published the report on former, disgraced Cardinal, Theodore McCarrick. The Velis report indicated that an accusation of sexual abuse against deceased Bishop Christopher Weldon was found to be credible. Further, the reports that Theodore McCarrick abused seminarians and priests also were also found to be credible. McCarrick was found guilty of his sins and crimes and was dismissed from the clerical state.

My friends, I wanted to address these issues because they are serious and they have a negative affect on our faith in the Church and her leaders and, for some, their faith in God. Whether the accusation against Bishop Weldon is true or not, sexual abuse of any kind, carried out by anyone – in these cases, by the clergy – is evil and unacceptable, especially among those who were ordained to serve God, the Church and His people. A priest is meant to serve, to aid the faithful in finding God, peace, reconciliation with Him and with others. A priest is meant to heal, to build up life, not destroy it. Sadly, we see too often that these men who have hurt so many did not live up to their priestly identity. Their behavior has leveled the Church's credibility and has caused many of the Lord's faithful to exit the Church – for good.

I wanted to take this opportunity to apologize on behalf of the Church. I want to apologize for the hurt that has been caused by our own clergy. I also want to encourage you, the Faithful, to talk about these topics, not to convince folks to leave the Church but rather to come back to Mass and the Sacraments. In all circumstances of life, including the difficulties we now face amid the sexual abuse by the clergy, amid the coronavirus, the Church – God – still offers us hope. There is hope for a better tomorrow. Hope for a purging of the Church of her sins. Hope for the faithful to remain steadfast in faith knowing that God sees us through because He is always one day ahead. Therefore, I urge you, my friends, to stand with me, to stay faithful, to fight for the purity and soul of the Church. Do not let the devil shake your faith but rather stand firm in it, stand firm in hope that God will have His victory. *Firmum est Corm Meum: My Heart is Steadfast.* Let this be our "motto" for advent and as such be for us a time of great spiritual renewal.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Jon Reardon*