



A.O.H. Allegheny County Board

Catholic Action Update for September, 20th, 2018

Father Vaskov, Worthy President, Members of the Board, Distinguished Visitors, and Brothers All,

I stand before you, myself a horrible sinner, in grave need of God's Mercy and Forgiveness, and it is with complete humility that I present this report about the current crisis in the church.

So far, this year has been rough on Irish Catholics. In May, Ireland voted by an overwhelming margin to overturn the 8th Amendment that guaranteed protection for mothers and unborn babies, opening the way for legalized abortion on demand in Ireland. Planned Parenthood claimed this as their crowning achievement, since Ireland and Poland are the only remaining countries in Europe without legalized abortion. As a result of the recent Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report many of our priests, including at least one AOH Chaplain, have been placed on administrative leave, restricting them from any priestly activities. Last month, even my long time past pastor at St. Therese in Munhall was placed on administrative leave, as was the past pastor of St. Mary Magdalene in Homestead, who actually married my brother Jimmy.

As Catholic Action Chairman, I've received many personal inquiries and comments about the situation, as well as several excellent articles being posted in the Hibernian Digest and email blasts from our National President, Judge McKay. Some mention the resignation of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, and implications of Cardinal Donald Wuerl's pending resignation.

As someone who has studied our precious Catholic faith, I find the crisis shocking, upsetting, and expected. Many of you have heard me say that one of my favorite evangelists is Servant of God, Fulton Sheen. Sheen was not only a brilliant board certified psycho-analyst, a PhD, and recipient of a Doctorate in Sacred Theology, he was clearly a prophet. In a recording made on January, 26, 1947, he predicted the challenges we are now experiencing. You can hear the entire lecture at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhaCjUGamjk>. Sheen's chilling lecture includes comments about the world being in a transitional phase between a Christian era and an anti-Christian era. He goes on to say the reason for the transition is that the world is having more influence on the church than the church is having on the world. This lecture is less than 20 minutes, and is the first part of a series of lectures on Anti-Christ & Crisis in the Church & Society. All you really need to do is google Fulton Sheen, and you will be presented with a lifetime of Sheen's material.

There are also several good books that discuss the origins of the current crisis, including the drivers of the crisis, the doctrines of those diabolically opposed to church teachings, where these doctrines have taken root, and the current manifestations of their doctrines, including abortion, priest pedophiles, same sex marriages, and other practices set completely against the teachings of Holy Mother Church.

- "Dupes: How America's Adversaries Have Manipulated Progressives for a Century," by Paul Kengor.
- "Goodbye, Good Men: How Liberals Brought Corruption into the Catholic Church," by Michael S. Rose.
 - Chronicles changes in U.S. Seminaries during the 20th century that gave rise to the current priest pedophile crisis.
 - When referring to the Holy Catholic Church, the term "Liberal" is meant as one who does not hold orthodox opinions about church teachings. It is not to be confused with the term "Liberal" with reference to any political party.
- "The Faithful Departed: The Collapse of Boston's Catholic Culture," by Philip F. Lawler.
- "Inside the Atheist Mind: Unmasking the Religion of Those Who Say There Is No God," by Anthony DeStefano.

- This book has mixed reviews and is definitely strongly biased towards the author's opinion; however, the book puts names and dates on popular atheist doctrines that have crept into our culture, as well as the tactics and strategies atheists have used to gain control over education, politics, and the media.
- "The Bible - Romans Chapter 1," by St. Paul.
 - St. Paul makes many blunt commentary about the state of sexual misconduct, during the time Jesus walked the earth.
- "The Bible – The Passion of Jesus Christ," all four Gospels.
 - God knew that any institution made of men would be subject to corruption. It was no accident that Judas, one of the twelve apostles handpicked by Jesus Christ, would betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, leading to Jesus' eventual crucifixion. It's also no accident that Judas' betrayal of Jesus triggers the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We all have to remember that Jesus tells us he will be with us always, until the end of the earth. While we may not realize it now, God is allowing the current crisis to exist, in order that, like Christ's Passion Death, and Resurrection, a greater good may eventually result.

What do we do in this crisis?

In his most recent newsletter, Dr. Scott Hahn has five suggestions that will keep us rooted in sound church teaching as students majoring in the "Mysteries of Jesus Christ:"

First: Declare your major now, and let it be the Mysteries of Jesus Christ – not current events, not church gossip, not ecclesiastical speculation, not critical studies of the minutiae of bishops. Those are blind alleys. They're distractions. Major in Jesus.

Second: Lean into the liturgy. Go to Mass more often, if you're not already going daily. If you are going on weekdays, listen more attentively, be alert to the Holy Spirit, recognize that God is urgently speaking to you through the Scriptures proclaimed every day.

Third: Think about joining a Catholic Bible study – or starting one. If you're starting one, stay committed – please! – and prepare well.

Fourth: Think about incorporating Bible study into your family prayer (see Deuteronomy 6:4-7). An easy way to do this is through the St. Paul Center's Journey through Scripture videos, which come with discussion questions.

Fifth, but most importantly: Pray. Please pray that your own conversion will be ongoing. Pray that you won't be become drawn into rage, fascinated by the sins of others.

Although not one of Scott Hahn's suggestions, Fulton Sheen often likens the body of Christ on the Crucifix as the body of Christ as the church. He goes on to explain that Christ's body has been tortured and is covered in dried blood, filth from falling onto a road traveled by live animals, and even the dried spittle of those who mocked Jesus. This corrupt flesh and filth also represents corruption in the body of Christ as the church, made up of sinners in desperate need of God's Mercy and Christ's redemption.

And let us never forget that Hibernians have always stood in defense of Holy Mother Church and the myriad clergy and religious who dedicate their lives to the propagation of the faith, the care of the poor and needy, and ministry of the sacraments. Without them, there is no church. Please keep them in your prayers and show them your love and support.

Also prepare yourself for the future. The current scandal isn't going to just go away. Combined with the shortage of priests, and reorganization of the diocese, Catholic life as we know it will continue to change for the foreseeable future. If you haven't already been subjected to harsh criticisms for being a Catholic, brace yourselves, and pray that we have the strength to prevail through this current crisis, as we did when Henry VIII persecuted Catholics in Ireland, Great Britain tried to starve Ireland out of existence, the Know Nothings burned churches in New York City, and the Coal Barons abused our ancestors for profit. All of these tragedies created an Irish Catholic race that would prefer death to renouncing our love for Jesus and His Bride, Holy Mother Church.

There has been some discussion that we should have the opportunity to meet and discuss what's going on in the church. I would certainly welcome that idea, and if anyone is interested, please see me after the meeting, or send me a text or email in the next few days. If at least two more people are interested, I'll make sure and get the first meeting scheduled and get things kicked off.

May God bless all of you, all of our brother Hibernians, all Catholics, bring a swift resolution to the current crisis, comfort those who have been harmed in any way by clergy or religious, and guide church leaders, through the Holy Spirit, to make the tough decisions to rid the church of corruption and abuse, in Jesus' Holy Name we pray, Amen!