

## THE LETTER OF POPE FRANCIS ON CHURCH SEXUAL ABUSE

Fr. Gerry Hefferan, 21 August 2018

Pope Francis calls for a “comprehensive and communal way” in dealing with the “extent and the gravity of all that has happened”.

Not only a **conversion**

“to acknowledge the truth of what has happened”,

But for all of us

“to take on the pain of our brothers and sisters wounded in their flesh and in their spirit.”

This is not optional.

The whole church must acknowledge, condemn and beg forgiveness.

Pope Francis says

“It is essential that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable.

Let us beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others.

An awareness of sin helps us to acknowledge the errors, the crimes and the wounds caused in the past and allows us, in the present, to be more open and committed along a journey of renewed conversion.”

Pope Francis calls for **penance and fasting**, that

“will help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people’s sufferings and to overcome the thirst for power and possessions that are so often the root of those evils.

May fasting and prayer open our ears to the hushed pain felt by children, young people and the disabled.

A fasting that can make us hunger and thirst for justice and impel us to walk in the truth, supporting all the judicial measures that may be necessary.

A fasting that shakes us up and leads us to be committed in truth and charity with all men and women of good will, and with society in general, to combatting all forms of the abuse of power, sexual abuse and the abuse of conscience.”

September 2<sup>nd</sup> is national Child Protection Sunday and Father’s Day.

At each Mass that weekend, we begin at the Healing Stone in our prayer garden.

And again, we place before God, the prayers we prayed earlier this year at our service of Lament and Sorrow.

This Friday evening at the 7pm Prayer Vigil,

We pray about the essential matters Pope Francis has raised.

This Saturday, all are invited to fast and pray wherever you may be.

There will be more details to come in our parish media.