

November 16, 2015

Dear Parishioners:

I would like to draw your attention to a recently released movie called “Spotlight.” It is about the investigative efforts of the *Boston Globe*, which uncovered the child sex abuse scandal in the Archdiocese of Boston in 2002. Vatican Radio has described the film as “honest” and “compelling,” and says that the *Globe*’s Coverage of the scandal—for which it won the Pulitzer Prize—helped the Church in the United States “to accept fully the sin, to admit it publicly and to pay the consequences.” While painful to watch, this movie is one to be taken seriously.

This movie reminds us that the sex abuse scandal isn’t something to “put behind us,” but instead is something we need to keep in front of us at all times, so that we can stay vigilant and make sure it never happens again. We must never deviate from our commitment to creating a safe environment for our children and young people. I was personally shocked as I saw the scandal unfold and how so many leaders in the Church tried to cover it up and even transfer priests to other assignments where they continued their scandalous behavior. As the scandal spread and even reached the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, I strived to be as honest as possible with you. It pained me when I read about priests whom I thought I knew that were guilty of sexual misbehavior—particularly with children and youth. Although I did not see these men moved from one parish to another as happened in Boston and elsewhere, still they were not dealt with as severely as what now seems appropriate.

I think we as a Church have learned from our mistakes. Here in the Archdiocese we are working every day to make sure that our children are safe and cared for in our parishes, school, and ministries. The Archdiocese reports incidents of abuse, whether by clergy, staff, volunteers, or others to law enforcement and collaborates actively with law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute abuse. Priest, deacons, school faculty and administrators, and other staff members in our parishes and schools are trained in discharging their obligations as mandated reporters under California law. All clergy, paid parish/school personnel, and volunteers who work regularly in a supervisory role with children or youth must be finger printed. The Archdiocese instituted *Virtus*, a three-hour training program for adults which teaches the five basic steps of child sexual abuse prevention. We offer that program here on a regular basis and require it for anyone in the parish who works with or around children and youth on a regular basis. Throughout the Archdiocese nearly 300,000 have taken part.

We can’t go back into history, but we can learn from our mistakes.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor