

## From Fr. Fleming's Desk

*Brothers and sisters: I want to share with you my prayer on this past Thursday morning:*

Dear God,

As the story of our Church's sins is told yet again, the headlines and sound bytes are painful for all of us to read and hear and this is especially true for those who have been abused and betrayed. Our wounds are many and deep: touch us gently with your merciful healing and restore the peace and joy of faith in our hearts and minds.

It's too easy in times like these to forget the good work, faithfully done by so many, especially our work in service to the poor. Even in these difficult days, Lord, keep us faithful to our mission: may our shame not obscure the light of your presence in the work we do in your name.

We have over 40 young children and 17 teen and adult volunteers in our Vacation Bible School this week: I'm so grateful, Lord, for those who continue to find our parish a safe haven for our youth, a place for them to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Many have already lost and many more are now losing trust and confidence in the Church, Lord. Send your Spirit into their hearts (and the hearts of us all!) with the gifts of endurance and perseverance.

Our Church and its structures are in dire need of reform and renewal, repair and rebuilding, renovation and restoration. We need your Spirit to guide us in letting go anything and everything that is harmful and not in keeping with your Word and your will.

These are times that call for wisdom and courage and self-sacrificing leadership: anoint our bishops with these graces and help them to say what must be said and, especially, to do what must be done - now.

Help us discover and understand how this failure in faithfulness took such a hold on your Church, Lord. Show us all that we must do to ensure that we will not repeat the sins of our past.

Make us all impatient with anything that impedes or retards the work that must be done. And give us patience, Lord, with how slowly change may come even when all that can be done is underway. Help us understand that the change and growth we need and want will not be accomplished overnight but only by greater fidelity to you, day by day, one day at a time, until the end of time.

Simplify your Church and its ways, Lord: strip away what is pompous and self-serving, arrogant and pretentious, haughty and smug; dismantle structures that keep us from the truth; root out pride and hypocrisy. And in the place of these fill us with your Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and awe in your presence.

Our past has yielded a bitter and spoiled harvest. In its place, Lord, give us a new crop filled with the fruits of your Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity.

As we acknowledge the sins of others, Lord, help us to confess our own sins, especially the times when we have been unfaithful to you, to your Word, to your Church and to one another.

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our own days. In your mercy keep us free from sin and safe from all distress as we wait in joyful hope until you come again, you who are our joy and our hope, now and forever. Amen.

