

**COMPLETION OF 40 DAYS OF PRAYER AND PENANCE
FOR REPARATION, RESTORATION AND HEALING IN THE CHURCH
October 1, 2018 - November 9, 2018
St. Paul Catholic Church, Tampa, Florida**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

First, I would like to acknowledge the fact that it was Bishop Robert Barron who inspired me to start the 40 days of Prayer and Penance Program for reparation, restoration and healing in the Church. He has become a prophetic voice in the United States, exhorting the people of God through social media to remain steadfast in faith during these turbulent times of clerical abuse in the Church.

I am grateful to the **124 faithful Prayer Warriors from St. Paul Catholic Church**, from my former parishes and from other parishes who prayed and did penance for reparation, restoration and healing in the Church during this stipulated time of 40 days. It is a sign of love for God and His Church. I believe our prayers have reached the ears of our loving and merciful God and Father. I thank my core team members of Adult Continuing Education, Celia Peynado and Chris Leuzze, for their cooperation in preparing and distributing the prayer material to all those who signed up. My sincere appreciation goes to our Pastor, Father Bill Swengros, for his support of this prayerful initiative.

During these 40 days, we have prayed for the healing of the wounds of the victims of clergy abuse so that they can continue with their daily lives and duties. We prayed for reparation of the damage done to the Church by her own leaders and restoration of trust, dignity and a safe environment in the Church. Finally we prayed for purging away of evil from the Church. Of course, the spiritual warfare continues until God's armies, under the leadership of St. Michael the Archangel, will achieve ultimate victory over evil.

To all those whose faith is shaken because of the clerical abuse in the Church, my advice is PLEASE DO NOT GIVE UP ON THE CHURCH. We are praying for you. Let not the crimes of a few church leaders be the criteria to leave the Church founded by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and fortified by the powerful Intercession of the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary; the heroic shedding of the blood of apostles and martyrs; the courageous witness of all saints; and the unceasing prayers of holy men and women of all ages and nations. Each and every one (priests, bishops, popes and the faithful) will have to stand before God, our merciful judge and forgiving Father, to be accountable for one's actions. Be assured that no one can escape the Divine Judgement. While it is easy to leave the Church, love for God entails taking up one's daily cross and

following the Lord against all odds. This is the way of righteousness and justification and the legacy of the saints.

As God brings good out of evil, the church authorities have taken strict measures to prevent future abuse in the Church while the sacramental, pastoral and charitable activities continue to be performed throughout the world. Therefore, let us once again begin to appreciate the mission and the beauty of our Church that is **ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC** as affirmed and taught by the First Council of Constantinople in AD 381.

On a lighter note, if you are having a stressful day, give big hugs to your pets who will soothe you. God bless you, your families and your pets!

— Fr. Robert G. Romaine, Parochial Vicar