

Letters to a Suffering Church

Are you frustrated with Sex Abuse Crisis 2.0? Would you be interested in talking about it, using Bishop Barron's book, *Letters to a Suffering Church: A Bishop Speaks on the Sexual Abuse Crisis*, as a guide to our conversation?

I invite you to join me in the church on **Tuesday, October 15 at 7:00 pm**. We'll begin with 15 minutes of prayer and then spend an hour discussing Chapter 1 "The Devil's Masterpiece." We'll conclude at 8:15. A few months ago, we provided you with copies of *Letters to a Suffering Church*. We'll order some more, if you didn't get one.

Here's how Chapter 1 "The Devil's Masterpiece" begins:

It has been a diabolical masterpiece. I'm talking about the scandal that has gripped the Catholic Church for the past thirty years and that continues to wreak havoc today. When I was going through the seminary, it was fashionable to conceive of the devil as a symbol for the evil in the world, a sort of colorful literary device. But the storm of wickedness that has compromised the work of the Church in every way and that has left countless ruins is just too ingenious to have been the result of impersonal forces alone or merely human contrivance. It seems so thoroughly thought through, so comprehensively intentional. Certainly, in the ordinary run of history, bad things happen, but this scandal is just too exquisitely designed. It has corroded Catholic credibility so completely that the Church's work of evangelization, catechesis, preaching, outreach to the poor, recruitment of vocations, and education has been crippled. And most terribly, members of the Church, especially its most vulnerable, have been forced to live through a nightmare from which it seems impossible to wake. If the Church had an enemy – and indeed the devil is known as the enemy of the human race – it is hard to imagine that he could have come up with a better plan.

In saying this, I am by no means implying that human beings bear no responsibility; just the contrary. The devil works typically through suggestion, insinuation, temptation, and seduction. He is essentially powerless until he finds men and women who will cooperate with him.... So it goes. And so it has gone these past several decades as

the dark power, through far too many willing cooperators, has done his work.