

Transcript: Listening Session #2
September 22, 2019, St. Mary's Church, Cossackie

Father Scott: Welcome friends. Thank you for being here. Thank you for coming. I'm so grateful that you decided to make this important time in the church's history something that you wanted to talk about. I want to thank you for being willing to donate time in the middle of a Sunday. A beautiful, one of, you know, we never know how many more beautiful Sunday afternoons we're going to have so your participation here is all the more meaningful. Thank you. Thank you for coming.

Just a few words of introduction so that we can set some parameters and these are based on some praying that I've been doing, on conversations with the Pastoral Council and the trustees and based on our experience last night having one of these sessions at St. Patrick's in Ravena. It was a very positive experience but positive does not mean there was not some very hard sharing that went on and I think there's a key to making that sharing really meaningful and helpful. So let's talk about that for a moment. I'm imagining that we'll be together for maybe about an hour, but I have no way to know that. We'll talk until as long as somebody has something to say. If we reach a point where things are getting quiet, then we can move along. If we get the point maybe say it's been 90 minutes, even if there still is energy, we may say that's about as much as we could do for one day and we can come back and make another appointment. There's nothing saying that we couldn't do this again.

We want to let you know as a ground rule, you are allowed to come and go as you need to. Restroom breaks, fine. Walking out is fine. We're not going to interpret somebody taking their purse and walking out the door as a veto of this whole thing. We're going to assume that you've got somewhere to be and we understand.

I also want to just state what the goals are. When we were designing this, the goal is just for us. The Diocese did not ask us to do this. This is our initiative. This is a chance for you to share whatever you need to get off your chest about how you're feeling, about what this has meant to you. This is a chance for you to hear what other people are thinking. I will tell you that the only way I can know what people are thinking is by what people tell me as they are leaving mass and have a conversation with me or with emails that I receive. And, I haven't received any emails this summer. Last summer I did. During the Pennsylvania scandal and during the time that Cardinal McCarrick was in the news. I did receive some emails and I did have some appointments with folks to talk about it. This time I have not. So this is a good chance for me as a pastor to learn exactly where you are. A secondary goal of this is to also get any question that you have answered in an official way. I'm not going to answer any questions today because I don't want to give half answers or partial answers that I don't know the real answer to. For example, let's say you were to say to me, I heard on the news that the Rochester Diocese is bankrupt. We will become bankrupt? I don't have any answer to that. I don't know. I don't know what the guidance would be on that. So, what we're going to do is we're going to isolate every single question you ask. We're going to submit it to the Diocesan Director of Communications and then we will return with a bulletin insert that will give the official answer to that question so that you know the

response. I'm hoping that we'll be able to do that in next week's bulletin; at the very least we'll be able to publish all the questions that we're asked. It can't make the bulletin deadline with the answers but I'm sure it will not be long. I will tell you that this is being recorded. It's being recorded on a number of different phones so that we are able to create a transcript. We're very grateful that ==== is here. She has experience as a clerk so she knows about transcription and making a pristine copy of the proceedings. Our goal for that is that we're able to isolate all the questions and have a really accurate record of what was said. We think that will be helpful for the Diocese to have so they know exactly what people in Cossackie and Ravena are feeling. They did not ask us for this, but we know that they will receive it happily. Then we will keep a copy for ourselves. This will be considered the Part Two session because there were plenty of Cossackie folks at the session in Ravena last night, so it's really going to be a mix of both parishes expressing themselves at this two-part thing. I know that there's also people here that are as frequently in Ravena as they are here at St. Mary's and there's folks here that are members of both parishes, so that will be helpful too.

The final thing I would just like to say, and I think it's just fair to put this out as a thought. There is no guideline for what you should share or not share today. There is nothing out of bounds. You are allowed to share whatever it is that you want to share. There is just, I would say, one bit of guidance that might help us. That is that it would be good to assume that there is someone here who sees things perhaps differently than you do and has a good reason to. Let's talk about just a couple of statistics that would make that possible. The experts tell us that 30% of people, 30% of all people have abuse somewhere in their past. Some form of abuse. Maybe sexual, maybe physical, not necessarily by a priest at all. Likely by a family member or a coach or someone who had violated the boundary. So, abuse is a very personal issue. We should assume that 30% of the people here have personal experience. Let me just give you an example. If someone were to say, I think this is all about money and all these supposed victims are lying. That would be a very painful thing to say. It's okay if you feel that way, but you should find a gentler way to say it. Only because I think a good ground rule might be no one should leave here feeling more pain than they walked in with. We already came in here with a lot of struggle. That's what motivated you to be here. So nobody should leave with more of a weight on their shoulders than they walked in with. I'll give you another example. There are people here who have a priest in their family, or who perhaps were so close to a priest and that priest is the most important person in their life. In that case, if someone were to honestly feel and say, I think all these priests are nothing but perverts, it's okay to say that. It's okay to feel that, but it would be painful for someone who loves a priest to hear that. So, maybe we could just keep that in mind that we should expect that we should share very freely but with the awareness that we wouldn't want anyone in listening to what we said to leave here with a heavier heart than they walked in with.

All right. So, what we can do is we can start with a prayer and then we will just transition and give us some time of silence and you are welcome to pierce that silence. We have a roving microphone that's going to go around. We do ask that you speak into the mic because Judy has some good transcription software she's going to use to type this up but it's going to be very hard if she can't hear. So, we want to make sure that this recording is

good and we've got two backup note takers here with us too, so we thank you for your service.

Let's begin with a prayer and just a moment of peace.

In the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

Lord, words like heartbreak, nightmare, shock and horror are not too strong for how we feel in light of these revelations about what happened in the church in the past. It is so hard for us to hold our heads proudly and declare that we are Catholic when there is so much in the news that is disturbing in the most extreme of ways. We call out to you knowing that you founded this church, that you love it, that you love us, and ask you to help us find our way forward. May the sharing that we hear today relieve the pressure in the hearts of people who've been carrying too heavy a burden. May the listening that we do for each other be a sign of our care for each other and your care for all of us, and may we together work toward a day when a discussion like this will be a distant memory and we will be a church renewed and refined. Purified by what we have suffered during this period of our history. We ask all of this in the Power of your Spirit through Christ our Lord.

Let's enter into a moment of silence. When you are ready to pierce that silence with a thought, raise your hand and Bob will be happy to come around and give you the microphone.

Female Parishioner: I just want to say that this time around, I'm relatively new to this community. So this particular issue is not hitting me as hard as it does for a lot of people. So, mostly I'm here to listen because this is my family, but before we get too far into how people feel on this particular issue, there is one thing I want to say from a previous experience of a listening session in another Diocese. When I was in high school in the early 2000s and there seemed to be a scandal being announced every few weeks, at the time it all seemed relatively distant until one day I walked into the family room and the TV was on with the local news saying my parish's priest had been defrocked, was gone and no one was allowed to call him Father anymore. Not long after that, my youth group had a listening session and there were a lot of people in that group that felt betrayed by the priest because he had meant a lot to them and they believed that this meant he wasn't who he said he was, and they really felt that betrayal. And there were a lot of people in that group who felt betrayed by the Diocese because they'd been really close to that priest and they felt he couldn't possibly have done whatever it was he was accused of, we didn't even know, and, so they thought the Diocese had let them down. I was the only one in that group that felt neither of those things. I had never liked him, and I felt guilty. It didn't necessarily make sense at the time, but I felt guilty because I had been struggling for years thinking that it was my fault that I didn't like a priest, and never addressed that in the listening session because it turned into addressing those two main groups and helping them go through that issue, helping them understand each other's view points. So, I just want to say that if it does start to seem like most people feel one way or another way, it's okay if you don't fit into either group.

Father Scott: Thank you. I think that's important for people to hear. Thank you.

Female Parishioner: I'm MP, and I'm very deeply sorrowful that Bishop Howard ---____. I know him as a great friend and I love him a lot and I when I heard these allegations, it really tore me apart, broke my heart, because he was there to do my daughter's confirmation, and then he was there also for my Goddaughter to marry ---name---. When I heard these allegations, I was ---I put myself there and I was troubled too because I have a granddaughter who is autistic and she can't explain herself. She's 18 years old but she goes into these screaming spells when she has the PMS and my grandson that's 23 has ---____. So my daughter is suffering a triple cross. She left the church and it hurt them very badly. I ---____, but I came back home again and that's the beautiful part. I'm home. I'm wanted and that's all I can say.

Father Scott: Thank you M. That's very sensitive sharing. Thank you.

Female Parishioner: Hi. I want to start by just reading something that was ---sung today. Power is a hunger burning in the breast. To walk among the mighty and trample on the rest and that's exactly what I'm feeling. About a year before my son died, my parish priest, I saw him walking behind [inaudible]. After my son died, he [inaudible] and he also said if you [large inaudible section]. In my opinion, I think I've heard that it is 83 so far in the Albany Diocese. This is my home. This is my parish, but faith in the Lord is [inaudible] but my faith in the Catholic Church is a [inaudible] is gone. It's gone. The Pope, all of them. It's gone. Bishop. There's two things that ---haunt me. One is the abuse that goes on and the second thing I think is even more important is those who knew and were in a position to move priests around after they knew what was going on ---____ [inaudible] they shushed it all around. They just pick them up like [inaudible] That is aiding and abetting a criminal. And I'm really angry. I'm really angry. This is a place, not this place, but we come to be filled with the Holy Spirit [inaudible] and a place where we come to ---____ with the Lord. To me it's, I feel it's just an abomination [inaudible] all the churches not just the Catholic Church. I know it's rabbis. It's everywhere. But I'm so sick and tired of nothing really being done. [inaudible] these people should be in jail. They're criminals.

Father Scott: I think a lot of people can hear you and resonate with that very well. We all hear you. Thank you.

Female Parishioner: [inaudible] all the other good priests. People say to me, well if priests could get married [inaudible] it would change. It wouldn't change. People don't become evil because they're priests. I [inaudible] sexual abuse of children is not and was not, and never will be normal for anyone. So, it doesn't matter what [inaudible]. And also, in Ireland, for instance, it's been going on for years as well, and most of these took place 60, 70 years ago. It's not rampant today. It's like 2% of the population ---____. In the general public it's up to 4 or 5% for abuse of children. But in the priesthood it's down to like down to 2% ---____ and also in Ireland because of that now the altar boys that serve, the altar servers, cannot be in the sacristy alone with the priest. A member of the server's family has to be in there. Not just to protect the children, which [inaudible], but also to protect the priest because a lot of them have been accused and not been guilty either. So, children will say [inaudible]. And another thing I'd like to say, all the money this is going to cost. It's not all about money. It's not. The credibility of the church is hurt and also we've lost a lot of

souls. A lot of people left the church although not [inaudible] church although ---not this church because of this. That's really the sad thing about this whole thing.

Father Scott: Thank you for sharing that.

Female Parishioner: I feel very sad for the innocent victims of this crime. I mean, I don't know anyone, but I can imagine how they feel for the rest of their life they have to carry that with them and I'd like to know what could be done to stop the problem.

Father Scott: So there's a good question that we'll offer the Diocese. As we stand right now, what can be done to solve the problem?

Female Parishioner: I [inaudible] abuse. [Inaudible] I've been ---____ to recovery. Both of my children have. Neither one of my children come to church no more. I know they'll come back but things like this stop them more because – and it's hard for me. I'm all confused and mixed up because people say to me, oh Catholics are hypocrites and I'm like, it's not about the people in church. It's about me myself, what I do. I go there for me. I don't go there for you or anybody else to decide what their faith is or if they're a hypocrite. But then when it comes to things like this with the bishop, why? Is it true or is it not true? How do I convince my kids? You know Dakota's going to make his confirmation, he doesn't understand a lot, but Nikki's coming up and when she hears these things and she asks me, how to I convince her, yes, you want to be a Catholic. You want to continue. You've got to trust these people. I don't know who to trust anymore. And you know their background of trusting and not trusting. [inaudible] I have found ---____ church you came. You are like a saint, I told you that. Dakota never cared about church. All he cared about was the donuts. [Background laughter.] He would tell me he was bored. I want to go. I want to leave right now. He can't wait to get here because of Deacon Mike, to see you and ---____. And, he tells me at times when we sing, it makes him feel like crying. So, I know you're getting to him where nobody else ever got to him before. And, I just think about when they start asking me these questions, what do I say? I don't know if he's guilty yet. I don't know. I'm confused myself so how can I talk to my children?

Father Scott: You're speaking for a lot of people. I think you're speaking for a lot of people.

Female Parishioner: Quick question. How do we know, how much of this is really true? How do we know? There is no records, that we keep, right? I don't know. I mean I feel sorry for anybody that's been abused ---in any way, but to be honest, I'm having a very hard time understanding ---____ my faith. I've ---got my faith and I just depend on that. I just don't think they're that people that bad. I don't know. Maybe it's just me. I don't know but it really bothers me to hear about all this stuff and I think it would be terrible to think that people are being accused by some of these people and it's just not true. If it is true, then they need to be punished. But now days, society, people ---always like to say something just to get in the paper. Who knows? Who knows if all these things are really true that's being said and I find it very hard to believe it could be like this. No matter what, it's not going to change my faith. It's there in my heart.

Father Scott: Thank you for sharing that. I have to say that we're hearing that in both listening sessions. The distinction between faith in God and faith in the institution, to know that those are two different things. We're hearing that from several folks.

Female Parishioner: I think most, I think probably all of us, feel that the church is a boat being tossed on the waves, and until these allegations are proven or disproven, the fact is that we don't know what shore this boat ends up on. It can go either way, and I think about the victims and I think about if you're accused in your innocent, well then you have a lifelong chore of trying to clear your name and I can't even imagine how hard that is if you're innocent. But if you're proven guilty, well then you have to think about the --- obvious victims. And then I think about the dwindling church members. And it doesn't take a lot for people to, I think now days for a lot of reasons, people are on shaky ground as far as going to church. Recently I went on a retreat. It ---was a Catholic retreat and out of the 16 people there, 5 people went to the mass. So, I think that's a telling thing. I sit there and I'm thinking well, why are --- empty? And I have no idea. Maybe it's because of this; maybe it's because of things that happened in the past. Maybe they're afraid of what will happen in the future. But I hate to think sometimes that the future of the church is --- pews and I hope that's not the case. And I think that if a person is guilty of abuse, I think it's a betrayal, but you don't blame Jesus because of Judas. That's what I think. Thank you.

Father Scott: Thank you for sharing that. That's a powerful word.

Female Parishioner: --- reading the Evangelist that those who are aspiring to the priesthood have been asked upon entering their training to have additional courses or information might be given in light of the scandal. And I was wondering if those who are already ordained priests have also been asked to attend any kind of mandatory classes or supplemental training in light of the scandals.

Father Scott: Yes. And we can place that as a question for official answer for the Diocese, but yes. Everyone not only are all priests given more training, but all parish staff is given more training, and we have background checks now for everybody in the parish. But we'll allow that to get an official answer from the Diocese but the short answer is yes. Everybody who works for the church, priests and all lay staff, are trained now for this exact issue and to spot it, to spot when there's problems, and there are also background checked to make sure that they don't have any record of any of these problems and there's a zero tolerance policy for that.

Bob: [inaudible].

Female Parishioner: The other question that I get, well it's the same thing actually, I know that we've been blessed in our Diocese to have an increase in the number of people who come into the program to aspire to become priests, but I was wondering if there's any statistical information since the scandals became more prevalent nationwide as to how it's affecting our church.

Father Scott: Anything specific you'd like to know about how it's affecting the church?

Female Parishioner: [inaudible]We've had increases in our Diocese in those --- but overall there's been a decrease [inaudible].

Father Scott: So, are the numbers of aspiring priests going down because of this? That's a good question for the Diocese too. Thank you for that. Isn't it amazing though when you see their faces, if you're a young person ---at a time of scandal, doesn't it amaze you that they would choose to walk in this way at this time. I look at that poster and I think, wow. I came into this during easier times. It was after 2002, so we were still in the scandal era but I entered in 2009, I was ordained in 2013, so there is this pocket where it was not as fresh and boy, to do it now, that's a brave thing.

Female Parishioner: I'm just going to add one other thing. A few people are talking about the difference between faith in God and faith in the church and ---actually about people leaving or not aspiring to the priesthood. In my high school, an awful lot of people stopped believing in the church. They said at the time that they still believe in God but there were going to stop attending mass. I'm still here because I went to World Youth Day in Toronto, and John Paul II told us that we are the church. We are the future of the church. We will build the direction it goes. So, if I left, I'd be giving up on the church. I would be telling God, no thanks. That's too much work. So I'm still here because the church is not perfect but if everybody who believes in God and --- to find the right path leaves because the church is not perfect, then the church will definitely fail.

Father Scott: Thank you. You bringing up --- too, that the church is not...it is an institution, but it's many more things than that and one of the things it is, is about people of God and we're --- is a complicated decision. That's really a good point.

Male Parishioner: I don't know if this going to help or anything, but this happens in all the different professions, teachers, Boy Scouts and things like that. About 30 years ago I went to counseling and it was explained to me that -nothing ever happened to me, don't take me wrong- but as humans we tend to put people on pedestals. We put our teachers, police officers, we put our priests, and it's not fair because you're only human, and you're gonna fall. And if you fall, we become angry. I think in this case with the church, the anger is that that person was moved to another church. He wasn't held accountable for his actions; whereas, a teacher or a policeman would lose their job. And I've talked to you, Father Scott, about this, even if this person did what he did, if he asks for forgiveness, God's going to forgive him. Who am I not to forgive him? He's human. We sin. That's all.

Father Scott: Thank you. Thank you for that.

Female Parishioner: I've heard it said that the church is a perfect institution run by imperfect people. It's always been that way and at the risk of beginning to sound like a Pollyanna, I think at the end of the day, I think that we'll be okay. I really do.

Father Scott: God can make it work with imperfect people.

Female Parishioner: Absolutely.

Father Scott: Thank you.

Female Parishioner: I really wondered this and people have too that I've spoken with and have questioned that if the priest is in mortal sin, committing sin and celebrated the mass, is that valid? And I think Tammy alluded to this about the sacraments, the other sacraments, confirmation.

Father Scott: Good question. We'll get the official answer, but those of us, a lot of us here do know there's a distinction made in the church that yes, there's fancy Latin terms for this, but it is understood that the validity of the sacraments does not depend on the worthiness of the priest at all. So a sacrament celebrated by a priest in mortal sin is not invalid. It's on the priest's personal responsibility; it does not affect the people of God at all. But that's a good question. That should be in our bulletin insert for sure.

Female Parishioner: In talking about all of this, I go both ways in feeling because also to think about the person that's been abused and what they go through the rest of their life. I mean with what I do with foster children, I see it all the time about when they're abused. It's a lifelong of unhappiness for them. They still have nightmares. It lives with them forever; they always remember it. So we have to think of the ones that really have been abused too and pray for them, their healing, because it's a terrible thing to not be able to get rid of that.

Father Scott: Terrible. Thank you.

Female Parishioner: I've gone through many different feelings on this subject. I've gone through embarrassment when people bring it up ...part of the Catholic Church, not embarrassed to be a Catholic, but I feel that this is my family and part of this family that are part of the scandal, I feel horrible for the victims. Nobody should have to go through abuse. But, I also feel bad for the priests, the bishops who are being accused and may not be guilty. They get plastered all over the news. You see their face, you hear the scandal, but then it's kind of gone away for a little while so you don't know what's going on in the background. You don't know --- Bishop Hubbard has denied everything. Maybe he is innocent. Maybe he didn't do any of this, but that's not on the news. All they're saying on the news is he did this; he did this to so many people. Now another somebody else has come out and said they were a victim of his. Maybe it's true; maybe it's not. We don't know. None of us have been there. Nobody knows what happened, what went on. I mean if it did happen, like I said, that's horrible and I feel horrible for anybody involved, but if it didn't, I feel bad for those being accused. That also makes me feel embarrassed that I'm looking at the other side of it. Yes, there could be victims. The priest may be the victim here. The bishop may be the victim here. We don't know. Nobody has all the answers, but it's how bad the Catholic Church is, that's all we hear on the news. Then I feel sad that I talk to people or try to talk to people about it and this is all they say, this is why I don't go to church anymore. You can't trust any of them. Blah, blah, blah blah. No, come to my church. You will see my

priest and you will know there are good priests out there. You can't all be lumped together. That's just my feeling.

Father Scott: Thank you. That's very, very kind of you. I also think that you said something interesting and very important is, every time there's an accusation, we know there's a victim. We know there's a victim. And when it's a true accusation, which I think, you know it's innocent til proven guilty puts us in a hard position, doesn't it? Because you never want to disbelieve a victim because victims have a big, that's big problem in our world. People don't believe victims, but at the same time, we know that if a person is accused they can never clear their name. These are very hard things. Very hard things. Thank you.

Female Parishioner: I just wanted to add that if this was happening not in the priesthood, if this was happening in today's society with people, and if I was on the jury, I'm not going to judge anybody, the bishop or any priest who does this – or doesn't do it. I don't know because I don't have charges in front of me. I don't have evidence in front of me. If I was sitting on a jury, I would, and I think that's part of my ---____. We can't tell our parish whether somebody has or hasn't unless we see the evidence. So why is isn't that being given to us? I want to see the accusations. I want to know for myself. If there's dates and times and people can ---mention that, and [inaudible]. Then yes. Somebody's done something. But if they haven't, we don't know. We will never know because we don't have any evidence.

Father Scott: Does this seem fair to you [inaudible] correct answer. Why do we hear the accusations but not hear any of the evidence?

Female Parishioner: Absolutely.

Father Scott: Why does the public hear the accusation, but not also get some evidence so that they can understand what's happening. That's a good question. If we can hear they accusation, we'd like to hear the more than that so that we're not just left to wonder.

Female Parishioner: You know, you're right because we hear the open-ended accusations. You either read it in the newspaper, or hear it on the radio or on the television, or whatever and it puts that thought of doubt in your head. So then you're left to go on your merry way and sort it out yourself and you can't do that unless you have the facts, and the facts aren't forthcoming. I mean these even the thing in the Evangelist, Bishop Hubbard denies accusations again. Well, he should ---____ you know. He has every right to, but the victims also have to come forth. But I think that the media, or the court system, or whoever, they're leaving people high and dry because you don't have anything to base your feelings on. It's just [inaudible] of what you read. I think they stop short of helping the people of the church to make their impartial decision. You just can't do it if you don't have the facts.

Father Scott: It's a heavy burden for sure. Thank you for saying that. I think that's fair.

Female Parishioner: If the abuser says he was abused and they find out that the person he blamed is innocent, he ought to have something against him and have to pay the

consequences. Because they're putting the people through this and their names all over television and if they just lied because, hey it was a fast way to get money, let's just say this: they ought to be punished too.

Father Scott: False accusations should be...

Female Parishioner: ...exactly.

Father Scott: So friends, we've been speaking about 45 minutes, a little less than that because I spoke at the beginning. I will say that what happened in Ravenna yesterday that was very nice was, we went back into silence when there was a pause in the sharing, we just entered into silence for a while and that allowed other people who maybe had been debating, should I share this or shouldn't I, or I'd like to speak but I'm not sure, sometimes they need a little bit of silence. So, we can create a little bit of silence now and you are allowed to pierce that silence whenever you want. You can just raise your hand or speak up so Bob can hear you and bring you the microphone. But there's nothing wrong with saying we've done some listening and some sharing and maybe it's enough for today. So let's just create some silence and anybody who wants to pierce it with sharing is welcome to, but that might allow some people to come forward that may have been reluctant.

{Short period of silence.}

Female Parishioner: [inaudible] not nearly as bad today as it was years ago with abuse.

Father Scott: There are statistics that we know that the numbers have plummeted since all of the protections were put in place after 2002. All of the instances have plummeted, so we can never promise that a place is completely safe just like in any industry we could never say you will never get food poisoning in a restaurant, you will never be mistreated by a police officer. We cannot promise that, but it has plummeted. This is not what we're talking about. All of the cases we're talking about are not current.

Female Parishioner: Father, you know my history, part of my history. But, my mother was found in bed in New York City and the man that was with her was a priest. So, I didn't hear too much about it because I've been through hell and back again. But, I was shocked when I was told that. I mean, she lived in the street because her sister wouldn't take her in or nothing. So, I didn't know. They didn't give me all the information but they said that a priest was with her. A man was with her and it looked like a priest.

Father Scott: I never heard that before. Thank you for sharing. I'm sorry.

Female Parishioner: [inaudible]

Father Scott: And you haven't done it yet?

Female Parishioner: No. No, I haven't done it yet.

Father Scott: I'm sorry to hear that. Thank you for sharing that.

Father Scott: Before we close, would anyone like to share anything? Well, thank you. You've been very generous with sharing. The questions are excellent. I think nobody has shared anything that I couldn't relate to on some level. Some of you shared so sensitively and beautifully. I will tell you that last night in Ravena a woman who had a child who was sexually abused as an altar server told her story for the first time; had never told ---a group that before and shared it with us. She is not from the Albany Diocese. It happened in the Rochester Diocese, but it was very tender sharing and so obviously in this listening session some very important things have happened. Some fruit has really been born and I just want to say there's no way to know if somebody heard something that helped them today. Perhaps somebody has been very helped by something that was said today. We can hope that is true. If there is a need for more of these sessions, we can do it. This has been very positive for me. I'm very grateful for it. We are going to take all of the questions. We're going to submit them to the Diocese. If the Diocese is not able to meet the deadline for this week's bulletin, we will give you just the questions so you can see what people have asked and then as soon as they can get them finished we will have them in the next bulletin that's available. We are going to remove all names. We are not going to identify anybody. If you want to be identified, of course, you could be but the more effective way to do that probably if you want to be heard, is to write a letter directly to the Bishop. Thank you for your investment of time and for the fact that you care so much for your church. We're all here. All of us share faith in God. I think that's the primary thing we all share. Some of us are able to have some respect for the institutional church and for others of us that's been shattered. So all of us can be gentle with each other as we walk through this and pray for all of those who are hurt ---involved.

There's a book that I want to tell you about. We've ordered it for you. It would have been here right now except for an internal error. It didn't get shipped in time so it's going to arrive on Tuesday at the office. But if you would like a copy feel free to call our office and ask for one to be reserved for you. They'll put a sticky note on it with your name on it and leave it at Mission Central for next weekend. This is a book by Bishop Robert Barron. You probably know him as Father Barron. He's just been a bishop a short time. He's the Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles. He is the one who started the Word on Fire website, which is one of the most popular Catholic websites. He's an excellent author. He's written some great stuff. He's written this book. This book came out just now in response to what we went through last summer when the Pennsylvania Grand Jury issued it's report when Cardinal McCarrick's name was into the news. I read this on retreat and I was able to read it in an hour and a half. It's not hard to read, but I'll just share with you in five chapters. In Chapter One, he says this scandal is so terrible on so many levels it's clearly been designed. There's a design to it. He's not accusing of a conspiracy. He thinks it's a spiritual conspiracy. So he talks about it being a masterpiece of darkness. So the first thing we will say is, that's the first chapter. He wants you to understand that lens. Then he goes to scripture and he found scriptures I never would thought of applying to this, but he does a really good job of applying some key scriptures to the situation at hand. Then he takes you on a chapter of a brief history of the church introducing you to some of the very worst popes. The very, very worst ---____. In a way he said, and he said something really good.

He says, I'm not telling you to shock you. I'm telling you that almost as a vaccine so that you have some of the, you've been exposed to the flu virus so that you don't have to catch it. To know that we've been in bad places before and the church that you loved as a child or earlier before this happened, had already been through that. So maybe it will give you a little openness to find a way to make peace with what we're dealing with. Chapter Four has got a great title: Why Should We Stay? Why would you stay in this kind of a situation, and then Chapter Five is called The Way Forward. He wrote a beautiful prayer at the end of the book. I'd like to just share a little bit of it as our closing prayer and I want to thank you for coming. I want to thank you for donating the time. I want to thank you for, I've received nothing but love and support. I don't expect that I need to receive that. I am totally prepared for people to be angry at me for what I represent, but I'm grateful for all of the love and support and I'm grateful that you come to church, especially when you are so disappointed in the church. It shows a true fidelity to God ---_____.

So, let us pray.

Grant we pray, Oh Lord, healing for all victims of sexual abuse. Purify your church of corruption. Bring justice to those who have been wronged. Grant consolation to all who are afflicted. Cast your light to banish the shadows of deception. Manifest to all your advocacy of those who have been so cruelly hurt and your judgment upon those who having perpetrated those crimes remain unrepentant. Compel those of your church to whom you have entrusted to safeguard the innocent and act on behalf of the victims to be vigilant and zealous in their duties. Restore faith to those from whom it has been stolen and hope to those who have despaired. Christ, you are a victim. We call out to you. Strengthen your faithful to accept the mission placed before us, a mission of holiness and truth. Inspire us to become advocates of those who have been harmed. Grant us strength to fight for justice. Impart to us courage so that we might forthrightly face the challenges to come. Raise up saints from your church and grant us the grace to become the saints you desire us to be. This we ask of you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Father Scott: Thank you for coming. Have a beautiful rest of the day. God bless you all.