

## Why I'm not leaving the Catholic Church – John Gehring

If there was a time for a demoralized Catholic to pack it up, the most recent round of clergy sexual abuse scandals would seem ample justification.

Questions about my Catholic identity are becoming harder to answer in recent weeks. How could somebody choose to associate with a church where the words predators and cover-up are now commonplace in headlines?

Of course, the abuse crisis isn't new. The National Catholic Reporter was chasing down the story almost two decades before The Boston Globe broke its bombshell investigations in 2002. No longer is there any doubt about the scale of this systemic evil. While it's true that most of these abuse cases occurred years ago, this has been a summer of anguish for Catholics.

The church feels at a breaking point.

So why am I still Catholic?

The church has always been a flawed, sinful, human institution filled with darkness and light. In part, I go to church these days to grapple with those contradictions, to find healing in the Eucharist and strength standing next to my fellow weary travellers.

I like to imagine those who became improbable saints – the Christ-denying Peter and the persecuting Saul who found redemption as Paul – looking down and reminding me that Jesus never abandons us, especially in our darkest hours, even when we don't know the way home. I refuse to let the church I love, still filled with grace, be handed over to men who abused children, abused power and defiled the sacred.

I'm probably writing this as a form of therapy. I'm piecing words together to form some order amid the chaos, trying to remind myself that the best lights that illuminated my path came from the same church that now seems shrouded in darkness. Catholic nuns who taught me about justice and dignity. Jesuit priests who taught me to pray and discern and think. Franciscans who reminded me that the grandeur and glory of God can be revered in a forest as much as any cathedral.

I'm grateful to those I never met but are spiritual teachers: Flannery O'Connor, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton. I want to summon all of that goodness and wisdom and spirit. I need it as medicine for healing. Fuel to keep believing. So with all those companions, living and dead, I will keep showing up. Together, we might rebuild our church again.

[John Gehring is Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life, and author of *The Francis Effect: A Radical Pope's Challenge to the American Catholic Church*.]

p.s. You may find the full article in the National Catholic Reporter, [www.ncronline.org](http://www.ncronline.org)



### ST. MONICA PARISH

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September 9, 2018  
**23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

PASTOR: **Rev. Robert Wong, SJ**

#### PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday

**9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm**

#### MASS SCHEDULES

WEEKDAYS: **9:00 am**

SATURDAYS: **9:30 am & 5:00 pm**

SUNDAYS: **9:00 am & 11:00 am**

#### CONFESSION SCHEDULE

SATURDAYS: **4:30 pm – 4:55 pm**

CONFESSIONS: 10 MINUTES BEFORE DAILY  
MASS OR BY REQUEST AT OTHER TIMES

#### NOVENA TO

**OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP**

WEDNESDAYS: **7:00 pm**

MASS FOLLOWED BY NOVENA  
& BENEDICTION

#### BAPTISM COURSE

EVERY 2<sup>ND</sup> TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT **6 pm**

#### BAPTISMS

4<sup>th</sup> SATURDAY AFTER 9:30 am MASS

#### HOUSE BLESSINGS

PLEASE CALL THE PARISH OFFICE

Today we have been called to open to God's Word and let it penetrate our hearts. Particularly, it is never a good idea to close our ears or to be silent to the plight of the most vulnerable among us.

#### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah tells the people to be strong and not to be afraid, for great things are about to happen. St James tells to show no partiality toward those who enter our lives. In the Gospel, Jesus cures a man and then orders the crowd not to tell anyone.

#### Today's Readings:

1st: Isaiah 35.4-7

Psalm: 146

2nd: James 2.1-5

Gospel: Mark 7.31-37

**PARISH UPDATES**

**PREP and RCIA** – Prep starts on Tuesday, 6pm, Sept. 11. RCIA begins on Thursday, Sept. 13, 7pm. You can refer to the notice board for more information or call the parish office.

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**Parish Pastoral Council Meeting** – Tuesday, 7:30pm, Sept. 11, is our PPC. Representatives of our parish ministries are urged to participate for the good of our parish life. We have some important topics for discussion.

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**Mission Appeal** - Fr. Gosbert Mgina, from the Diocese of Iringa, Tanzania, has been approved by the Archdiocese to preach and make his appeal at all the weekend Masses on Sept. 15 and 16. We welcome his presence among us. *Our next Sunday Collections will be earmarked for the Mission Appeal. May God bless our generosity!*

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**Parish Ministry Fair** - On September 22 and 23, all parish groups and ministries are encouraged to share your talents and time with our community. The Parish Centre will be the venue. Please welcome others to join your ministry.

**So great and outstanding a possession is the cross that they who win it have won a treasure.**

- St. Andrew of Crete

**Parish Anniversary** – On September 30, Sunday, 11am MASS, we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the blessing of the art glass windows of the church. Bishop Stephen Jensen of Prince George will preside. Sarah Hall and Amy Kwan, who designed the windows will also join us.

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**Pot-luck Luncheon** – Please prepare a pot-luck luncheon for our gathering after the Mass on September 30. A sign-up sheet will be made available for your contribution. Thank you in advance.

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**PROJECT ADVANCE 2018 – “Support the Faith - Continue the Legacy.”** We have met our Archdiocesan commitment of \$25,000. THANK YOU for all our pledgers. We need others who have yet to make a gift to respond to the appeal. The rebates will help to recover expenses for the new sound system in the hall and the repairs of the church roof. Our parish total goal is \$75,000. Please see one of our Project Advance volunteers. God Bless YOU!

You may also make your pledge online at [www.projectadvance.ca](http://www.projectadvance.ca) anytime.

**God created the world, writing into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore.**

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 221

**ARCHDIOCESAN UPDATES**

**Donate to the Wildfires Relief Fund for Whitehorse Diocese**—Please continue to pray for those affected by the wildfires as well as for the firefighters, first responders, and volunteers. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Whitehorse is asking for online donations and for material donations to be dropped off at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse. To help financially, please visit <https://rcav.org/whitehorse/>

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**Stewardship Awards 2018**—The Archdiocesan Award for Stewardship honours members of the laity who have provided exceptional service toward our Archdiocesan Priorities and Goals in time, talent or treasure to their parishes or the archdiocesan Church as an example of outstanding, Christian stewardship. Awarded every 3 years, recipients exemplify lives of gratitude and generosity and their lives are outstanding examples of “Stewarding God’s Gifts” in our community! Please submit your nominations to <http://rcav.org/stewardship-award-nomination/> by October 5, 2018. Awards will be presented at Mass on the Feast of Christ the King, **Sunday, Nov. 25, at 2:30 p.m. at the Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver.** All faithful are invited to attend. For more info. please contact [stewardship@rcav.org](mailto:stewardship@rcav.org)

**Stewardship Reflection**

The good steward must not show favoritism. The rich may have many material gifts to share, but St. James reminds us in the second reading that God has chosen the world’s poor to be rich in faith and inheritors of God’s kingdom.

**Mass Intentions**

**September 9-15, 2018**

- Mon, Sep 10— Betty Lau (Intention)
- Tue, Sep 11— Vera Decena (TG)
- Wed, Sep 12— *9am*, Joseph Mendoza (TG)  
*7pm*, Alice & Lawrence  
Fernandes (TG)
- Thu, Sep 13— Adoracion Marcelino (TG)
- Fri, Sep 14— Marcelino Revita (RIP)
- Sat, Sep 15— *9:30am*, Porfirio Guevan (RIP)  
*5pm*, Teresa Ira & Family (INT)