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# MERCY WORDS

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Read, Reflect, and Respond to “the Signs of the Times”

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## Mercy Words #10

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*Mercy Words* is a monthly publication intended to raise questions, explore ideas, and encourage “the people of God” to read, reflect, and respond to “the Signs of the Times.”

## What Can We Believe?

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We have read so much in newspapers, heard so much on television and radio, had so many people tell us how angry they are with “the Church,” with priests, bishops, even with the Pope as a result of all the accusations of sexual abuse of children and adults — girls and boys, women and men, priests and seminarians — by clergy, including bishops, even a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, and the subsequent “coverups” of these crimes and moral lapses by the hierarchy.



“The summer of 2018 has been a long and trying one for the Catholic faithful. It began with allegations that former cardinal Theodore McCarrick was guilty of sexual misconduct with seminarians and of sexual abuse of at least one minor. Then came the Pennsylvania grand-jury report detailing seventy years of sexual abuse in six dioceses and cover-up by bishops. Capping things off was the release of an eleven-page ‘testimony’ from Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, former nuncio to the United States, leveling sweeping charges against U.S. and Vatican church officials, including Pope Francis for mishandling the claims against McCarrick. At the end of the letter, Viganò calls on Francis ‘to set a good example’ and resign.”

*Commonweal*, 21 Sept 2018:4

**What** can we do? **Who** should we believe? **Where** are the credible voices of our leaders to help us through these difficult days?

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## What can we do?

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**Hold “listening sessions”** like St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Albany, NY did. These were conversations that offered a safe place in which to express one’s feelings, hear some of what other people may know or have experienced and possibly learn something of the behaviors that have contributed to “this scandal” in the Catholic Church. Or, like St. Edward the Confessor Parish did in Clifton Park, where parishioners “could say anything they wished, but also were given **four questions to reflect on:** “What are you feeling? How does the current situation impact your identity as a Catholic? What would you like to say to the hierarchy (national or local) and what do you need to hear them say/see them do? What can we as leadership in the parish [religious community?] do to assure that we're doing the best we can to make this [school, hospital, center] a safe environment?”

## Who should we believe?

**Good question. Here are some sources you may wish to consult:**

### *America*

**“Church Sexual Abuse Crisis: What You Need to Know”** <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/09/06/church-sex-abuse-crisis-what-you-need-know>

### *National Catholic Reporter*

**“LCWR ‘ashamed of the church we love’ after the abuse report”**

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/ministry-equality/lcwr-ashamed-church-we-love-after-abuse-report-55312>

### **Catholic Women’s Forum**

**Letter to Pope Francis from Catholic Women**

<https://catholicwomensforum.org/letter-to-pope-francis/>

**Complete List of Bishop Statements on McCarrick Scandal**

<https://catholicwomensforum.org/complete-list-bishop-statements-mccarrick-scandal/>

**Where are the credible voices of our leaders to help us through these difficult days?**

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**Good question . . .**

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