

CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD  
**Emmaus Catholic Parish**

Dear people of Emmaus parish,

As you might guess the recent revelations about clergy abuse in Pennsylvania and about Cardinal McGarrick have been deeply distressing to me, as I know they have been to you. I have been given pause to wonder, just as I did more than 15 years ago with similar revelations about clergy abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in Boston, why I continue to try to be of service to the Church.

I remained then because, slow and painful as it was, I did see the Church responding. Like many of us, I was frustrated that the hierarchy seemed untouched. But over the course of years that has changed to some degree, as evidenced by the pope recently requiring the resignations of the entire college of bishops in Chile and other bishops who have been complicit in cover-ups.

I can never deny that until recently there was a culture in the Church that tended to protect clergy. That culture allowed individuals who should never have been priests to continue in ministry and very often in abusive activities as well. However, our own former bishop, Gregory Aymond (now archbishop of New Orleans) quickly became a national leader in changing that. The Austin diocese was among the first to respond to the Charter issued by the United States Congress of Catholic Bishops on the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) requirements have been in place now for more than 15 years. The requirements ensure that 1) abusers do not have access to ministry, and 2) both clergy and laity are educated about how abuse happens. As a result, all priests, deacons and anyone in ministry to children and vulnerable adults must undergo criminal background checks and attend training sessions every three years. Those are designed to help us understand how abuse happens and to recognize it when it does. Since Bishop Aymond began EIM in the Austin diocese, I, as pastor of St. John Vianney in Round Rock and then Emmaus beginning in 2007, have required every volunteer in the parish to be compliant with EIM regulations. I require that all are trained, because a predator could be someone who is not working directly with children and vulnerable adults and might seem a respected member of the parish because of their volunteer efforts. Such trust can sometimes open the door for predators to take advantage of others.

With all of this the Church remains a flawed institution. One can say that most of the cases uncovered in the Pennsylvania situation are decades old, but the fact remains that they happened and the Church, in certain ways, allowed them to happen. I have seen progress and change in the past 15 years, and that is part of why I am still a priest of the Church. The other reason is that the Church is my home, as I know it is for you. I cannot walk away from my home. I can do my best to help to make it a better place by bringing its flaws into the light of day and doing my part to correct them. At its heart the Church is Jesus Christ. All that is not about Christ, which we human beings

often bring to our institutions, must be removed. Thus while I have lost faith, along with you, in some figures within the Church, I have not lost faith in the Church itself. I hope that you will be with me in moving forward through the darkness into the light that can be there for us if we keep our focus on the true heart of the Church, Jesus Christ.

As for action that you might take, I ask first for your prayers, for all who have suffered abuse by anyone. I ask as well for your prayers for the Church, that she will continue to respond by following Jesus' call to care for His people with the tenderness and love that all merit as children of God. I ask as well that you speak out and demand that our Church become more and more what Christ founded it to be—a foundation for our lives built on love for the sake of the salvation of us all.

Please pray especially for priests. Pray for the ones you know by name. Pray that we have the courage to address the issues honestly and that we are always inspired by the Holy Spirit with the correct words to say and actions to take in response to these revelations. Pray that we maintain our own faith and commitment to the Church.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Samuel Hose", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Fr. Samuel Hose