

MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE

Servant Leader Team:
*Restoring trust through
advocacy for the Body of
Christ*



At November's fall meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (usccb.org), the bishops voted to make "Protect and Heal God's Children" one of four priorities for the conference in its 2021-2024 strategic plan. Under this priority they included action steps such as "extend and ensure effective collaboration with the laity". While it is good and right that the bishops have just now put their collaborative desire in writing, the laity of Mary, Queen of Peace committed themselves immediately after it was brought to light in the summer of 2018, to addressing the renewed crises of sexual abuse and failed leadership.

Responding to the revelations of accusations against then Cardinal McCarrick, and the release of the Pennsylvania report, members of our parish community came together to advocate for change. The wounds from that summer were deep and painful for all of us, yet we believe that Christ's love for us, revealed and offered through the Sacraments, is where we can draw hope and belief in a restored and renewed Church. It was in this spirit that the MQP Servant Leader Team was formed.

Many of you may remember the Listening Session and Healing Mass that took place at MQP just over a year ago (Oct 2018), not long after the Pennsylvania report. At that time, our then pastor, Fr. Kevin Duggan, encouraged and supported a small group of parishioners who wanted to look at how we could address transparency, accountability and engagement in responding to the crisis, within our own parish. Fulfilling the mandate every baptized Christian has as priest, prophet and king, what can, and should, the laity do as our part in healing and restoring our Church?

With the strong support and encouragement of Fr. Chad, the MQP Servant Leader Team continues to work toward this restoration. We are made up of 12 parishioners who meet monthly to discern a) how the community of MQP can continue to proactively ensure protection of our young and vulnerable, b) how we might better respond to the tremendous need for healing, especially of those who have been harmed in any way by the Church, and c) how might we grow in our capacity to be a source of hope and trust for everyone within our community?

The mission statement for our team humbly proposes:

"Staying true to the Gospel, we the people of God, in service to the community of Mary, Queen of Peace and all people of God, strive to advocate for justice, safety and accountability within the Church. Restoring trust and remaining true to our faith, with Jesus Christ as the source of our hope and virtue, we promote a culture where everyone has a voice, and zero tolerance and transparency are upheld.

We, the laity, by our faith and by our works, heed the Holy Spirit's call and guidance to heal what is broken, advocate for justice where it is denied, keep safe that which is vulnerable, demand accountability where there is none, and promote dialogue over silence where silence is the enemy of truth. We offer hope for recovery of a mutual trust within the Church community, through careful discernment of the causes of the current crises of sexual abuse and corruption of leadership, and by promotion of prayer, action and reform faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ."

In addition to this letter, you'll find a copy of the MQP Listening Session summary report on the Restoring Trust page of our website, sent to retired Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, in preparation for his attendance at the November 2018 USCCB conference in Baltimore, MD. This report reflects the comments and concerns you shared about the Church, the sexual abuse crisis, and the issues with Church leadership.

In the year since the Servant Leader Team began meeting, we've continued to review your comments from the listening session and to discern how they can inform us as to what actions are needed and how we can serve as advocates for the many voices of the laity. There is much to be done and we are dedicated to every opportunity available to restore trust and offer hope and healing.

Look for regular and frequent communication from your Servant Leader Team as we endeavor to put our mission to action. Your continued input will be so very important to our efforts and so we invite and encourage you to reach out to us with any and all of your thoughts and ideas. Look for our Restoring Trust Comment Box at the Welcome Table in the narthex, as well as a special Restoring Trust tab now located on the website with resources related to this topic. We will publish a document that will update you all on MQP's continuing response to this topic, which will include a summary of our Listening Session from 2018. You may also contact us directly by emailing restoringtrust@mqp.org.

Thank you for your support, your encouragement and for your continued hope in the promises of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

"Let us hold unwaveringly to our confession that gives us hope, for He who made the promise is trustworthy." ~ Hebrews 10:23