

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

28 April 2010: Tim Concannon, St Laurence Catholic Church, Petersfield



We are all guilty

It has not been easy to be a Catholic recently. We have been forcefully reminded that the sins of the individual reflect badly on the whole body of believers. We can make all the points that we like to disassociate ourselves from the terrible things that have been done by members of our Church; that they are few in number, the Catholic Church in England has had procedures to deal with this problem in place for the past ten years and the cover up has been for the best of motives, but at the end of the day we all share the collective guilt of those who have committed these awful crimes and those who have conspired to conceal them.

What can we do? Well we have to remember that some of the last words Jesus said on the Cross were a prayer for the forgiveness of those who were crucifying him. We have to remember too that Jesus entrusted his sheep to a man who had denied him three times out of cowardice. We have to remember that this is the Church of Mother Theresa, Saint Francis and countless other good and humble souls whose names are not widely remembered.

We have to do penance ourselves for the sins of others, we have to accept the scorn of others with humility and we have to redouble our efforts, with the help of God's grace "never to offend thee again" because the sins of one offend the infinite goodness of our Father in Heaven and reflect on each one of us.

But above all, we need to pray for all the victims, who have not only suffered humiliation and hurt at the hands of those in authority, but also very probably, alienation from the Church.