

# Dear Padre,

**It seems one news story after another has reported a priest, bishop, or other person associated with the Church abusing a child. Why should I remain in the Catholic Church?**

**U**nderstandably, many Catholics have fallen into anger and despair, thinking their leaders were reprehensible hypocrites. But it's not unprecedented that some bishops, priests, and even popes have done bad things. Recall that Peter denied Jesus, and yet he became the first pope. We also recall that, except for John, all the apostles abandoned Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Scripture describes the Church as “the bride of Christ.” Paul said the Church is the bride for whom Christ sacrificed himself and “handed himself over for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Revelation describes the Church at the end of time “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). Like a groom or bride loves a spouse—faults and all—Christ loves his bride, the Church.

Matrimony is a sacrament designed by Christ, placing a man and woman amid society, committed exclusively to each other. As an example, it shows the world how Christ also loves his Church—even with its imperfections. Clearly, multiple groups claiming to be the church Jesus founded cannot be that true Church. That would make Jesus a bigamist! Only our Church traces its succession of leaders back to the original apostles.

That some leaders have been unfaithful doesn't mean the Church as a whole is unfaithful. Like a bride and groom pledging fidelity to each other on their wedding day, we should remain faithful to Christ and his Church.

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## Calendar

### Monday

FEBRUARY 14  
Sts. Cyril, Monk, and  
Methodius, Bishop

Jas 1:1–11  
Mk 8:11–13

### Tuesday

FEBRUARY 15  
Weekday  
Jas 1:12–18  
Mk 8:14–21

### Wednesday

FEBRUARY 16  
Weekday  
Jas 1:19–27  
Mk 8:22–26

### Thursday

FEBRUARY 17  
Weekday  
Jas 2:1–9  
Mk 8:27–33

### Friday

FEBRUARY 18  
Weekday  
Jas 2:14–24, 26  
Mk 8:34–9:1

### Saturday

FEBRUARY 19  
Weekday  
Jas 3:1–10  
Mk 9:2–13

### Sunday

FEBRUARY 20  
Seventh Sunday  
in Ordinary Time  
1 Sm 26:2, 7–9,  
12–13, 22–23  
1 Cor 15:45–49  
Lk 6:27–38

**Do you have  
a question  
for the Padre?**

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org)  
to send your question and  
to learn more about  
Dear Padre.

## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Missionary discipleship is a call from God for today's busy and complicated world, a constant setting out with Jesus... Only a Church which is bride, mother, and servant—one that has renounced the claim to control what is not her own work but God's—can remain with Jesus.*

JOURNEY TO COLOMBIA, SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

