



Letter  
to a  
*Suffering*  
*Church*

A BISHOP SPEAKS ON THE  
SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

STEP-BY-STEP PARISH LAUNCH PLAN

## STEP-BY-STEP PARISH LAUNCH PLAN

To help you distribute this book effectively to your parish, the Word on Fire team has put together this step-by-step parish launch plan.

If you have any questions along the way, please contact us.  
Email us at [book@wordonfire.org](mailto:book@wordonfire.org).



### **STEP 1: Order preview copy of *Letter to a Suffering Church*.**

Some pastors/parishes would like to preview the book before ordering for their whole parish. If so, you can order a free copy of the book at [order.sufferingchurchbook.com](http://order.sufferingchurchbook.com) (you just pay shipping + handling).

You might also consider ordering 20 copies of the book for just \$19 (with free shipping) so your entire parish staff can preview the book together. That way you're all familiar with the book's content and on the same page before ordering copies for your entire parish.

### **STEP 2: Determine your launch weekend.**

Once you're ready to order the book for your whole parish, you next want to determine when you'll pass out the books. Typically this is done on a weekend, after each of the Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses.

We don't recommend distributing the book on a major holiday weekend, or a weekend when many of your parishioners or staff are out of town. So look over your parish schedule and identify a weekend during which your staff is available, and you expect a large percentage of parishioners to attend Mass.

Also, keep in mind that if you're using the corresponding email/texting video course below (Step #5), which spans five weeks after passing out the book, you'll want to make sure you don't have any major initiatives during those five weeks which may crowd out the emails/texts you'll be sending to parishioners. So, on your calendar, don't only look at the launch weekend date—look at the five following weeks, too.

### **STEP 3: Determine how many copies your parish needs.**

Most parishes decide to order one copy of the book for each family in their parish. They estimate how many families attend Mass on the average weekend, then add a little buffer to ensure they're not undersupplied. We recommend ordering 10% more copies than you think you'll need, just to be on the safe side.

If you end up with extra copies, you can always distribute them in your parish office (leave a stack in the waiting area), have them available in the confessional, or pass them out to parishioners or visitors at the back of your church.

(Please note that the books are only offered in quantities of fifty, in both English and Spanish, so after you determine your order number, just round up to the nearest 50 or 100.)

### **STEP 4: Place your order.**

After determining how many copies you'll need, place your order at the website [order.sufferingchurchbook.com](http://order.sufferingchurchbook.com). You can also place your order by phone at **844-975-2665**.

You'll see that the website order form has some pre-selected quantities, but to order other quantities, [just click here](#).

(Note: the first books will ship out in **July 2019**. Orders placed after that will arrive in 1-2 weeks after the time of order and will be shipped free via UPS Ground.)

### **STEP 5: Decide whether to use the free 5-part video series.**

To ensure your parishioners read the new book after you pass it out, we've partnered with [Flocknote](#) to create a free, five-part video course for your parish. It comes with prewritten emails, text messages, and discussion questions to walk your parish through the book, chapter by chapter.

*(If your parish already uses Flocknote, you'll find the free video course in your Flocknote Library. If you're not yet on Flocknote, sign up now at [wordonfire.org/flocknote](http://wordonfire.org/flocknote).)*

### *Here's how it works:*

When you activate the course in Flocknote, parishioners will receive one short email or text per week, over five weeks—so just five total—corresponding to the five chapters in the book.

Each message contains a short video reflection by Bishop Barron, followed by a few discussion questions to use as a parish through Flocknote's private discussion system. The conversations will *only* be visible to parish staff and other parishioners, not the general public. It's a chance for your parish leaders to dialogue with parishioners about this important topic and ensure the whole parish is reading and absorbing the book together.

You simply choose the launch date in Flocknote (i.e., when the first email/text goes out to your parish), and then everything else works automatically, with no extra work. Think of it like a free, turn-key, parish-wide book study—all done through Flocknote, in just a couple clicks.

Before you choose to run this video series, decide on the five dates on which you'll send the five messages. We recommend the first message go out on the **Tuesday** after you pass out the books, and then the following ones on the **four Tuesdays** after that.

#### **STEP 6: Send the "Sexual Abuse FAQs for Parish Leaders" PDF to all priests, deacons, and parish staff.**

We've prepared a special FAQ guide which includes common questions you'll likely receive from parishioners, both about this book in particular and the sexual abuse crisis in general. You can download it free at [SufferingChurchBook.com](http://SufferingChurchBook.com).

Invite your whole staff to review this FAQ guide before launching the book initiative in your parish. That way, when parishioners bring up tough questions, your staff won't feel rattled and they will know how to respond.

#### **STEP 7: Review sample bulletin and pulpit announcements.**

At the website [SufferingChurchBook.com](http://SufferingChurchBook.com), you'll find sample bulletin and pulpit announcements to help you introduce this book to your parish. We've provided three sample pulpit announcements: shorter, longer (with video), longer (without video).

We've also provided images of the book to use in your bulletin or presentation graphics.

Especially note the "[Bishop Barron Announcement Video for Parish](#)". This video of Bishop Barron speaking directly to your parishioners is meant to be played at the end of all your weekend Masses, on the weekend you pass out the book. You can either stream the video from Vimeo, embed the video on a website, or just download the video directly to your computer or presentation software.

## **STEP 8: Pass out the book.**

On your chosen weekend, make sure to have boxes of books at each exit, along with 1-2 staff members or volunteers at each door to pass out the books.

After each Mass ends, just make the announcement (and show the video, if desired) encouraging people to get their book as they leave the church.

## **STEP 9: Follow up with parishioners.**

Finally, make sure you follow up with parishioners after they receive their book. If you're using the five-part video series (Step #5 above) then this is already done for you, as parishioners will receive one email or text message per week over the next five weeks, with short videos and discussion questions.

If you're not using the five-part video series, determine how you'll follow up with parishioners via email, bulletin, print mailing or some other form to make sure they're reading the book, and to help them absorb it.

You might consider promoting the **Group Discussion Guide PDF** we've created, which parishioners can download at [SufferingChurchBook.com](http://SufferingChurchBook.com). This was designed to help a small group of parishioners review and discuss the book in a single, reflective meeting.

*(Note: parishioners are expected to have read the book prior to the gathering, so you might want to wait 1-2 weeks before encouraging these small group meetings.)*

Again, if you have any questions or need additional help, please email us at [book@wordonfire.org](mailto:book@wordonfire.org). We're here to support you, and to ensure this book helps your parish community to navigate these difficult waters. God bless you!