**SAMPLE LETTER #1: THEME – HURTING THE PEW CATHOLICS** 2/3/21

Your Excellency:

Greetings in the name of Christ. I pray this finds you doing well.

We, the people in the pews, have watched as the difficulties between you and Fr. Mark White regarding the concerns he expressed (in his personal blog) about the hierarchy's handling of the McCarrick Report escalated. You suspended him in the early part of 2020, even as we were suffering the effects of the Covid outbreak, and needed our priest, someone we knew and trusted.

**This is about more than just the disagreement between you and Fr. Mark.**

We, the “people in the pews” have paid a high price for your decisions on this matter.

We saw our parishes and our faith embarrassed publicly by your letter posted in the Martinsville Bulletin.

We watched in shock as actions were carried out while his Appeal was being processed, in disregard for Canon law.

We were deeply hurt when the church locks were changed, giving us only limited access other than at Mass.

We were “preached to” by you, Excellency, about the need for unity and peace within the parishes.

YET, we have not witnessed any example of willingness on your part to “forgive” and seek reconciliation with Fr. White, only to punish. (Fr. Mark did offer his apology, publicly, for anything he wrote or said that you or others may have found offensive.)

The McCarrick report has been released. Lives have been damaged, both directly and indirectly, by McCarrick. This needs to end.

We believe it is now time for mercy and forgiveness to be shown, by allowing Fr. Mark White to return as our priest, so that healing may begin.

We need for you, as our bishop, to set the example for all of us, the “people in the pews.”

We humbly and respectfully ask for the reinstatement of Fr. Mark White to the parishes of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Joseph's.

Respectfully,

[individual's name]