

Hello Father,

First of all, I just want to say thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my heart. I came across one of your YouTube videos this afternoon. I am a new Catholic, and I'm also in an abusive marriage. I am in the diocese of ..., which really stinks. Looks like the diocese of Chicago has many more resources for women in my position.

When I began the process of coming into the church, I had to deal with a previous marriage and divorce that I had gone through. Because I am remarried, I had to have an annulment granted regarding the first marriage. The experience at my parish was quite terrible. The nullity minister was less than kind and compassionate. Despite all that, I was fully convinced already that the Catholic Church is the church that Jesus Christ himself founded, and more importantly that Jesus himself is present in the Eucharist. I was willing to walk through the fires of hell... (and I have) to do whatever it would take to be received into the church, so that I could receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

The worst part of the experience was when I had a private meeting with the priest. I knew that my current marriage is very painful and terrible. I didn't know what to do, and I didn't feel comfortable being vulnerable with the marriage and family minister, after the way she behaved during the annulment process. So that is why I made an appointment to talk directly to the priest. I thought it would be safer and that he'd give clarity on things. I was wrong. The first thing that happened when I walked in his office before I could even say a word about the situation, he said in a snarky and condescending tone "so, you want out of your marriage, huh?" I mean, I didn't know what to say. I was shocked and taken aback by the attitude, and I just fumbled through a response saying basically that I wasn't trying to run away, or take the easy way out. But that my marriage is terrible and that I am suffering. I wanted to know what my options are. I wasn't even sure if leaving would be an option. I was just trying to get some answers as to how to seek out peace, while still being obedient to God. The answer I got was "many great saints have been made in the

context of a difficult marriage.” I took that to heart. That was a year and a half ago. I can tell you that I have been tormented by my abuser over that time period. Now I’m seeing that basically, I was sent right back to my abuser, and without any kind of support. And the more I move toward God and sanctification, and allow him to change me into his image, the worse the abuse gets. My husband hates the changes that are happening in me. I don’t know how I’ve survived this. I’m sure the Saints have aided. I’m very familiar now with saints who have greatly suffered, such as Saint Rita in her marriage, and mother Teresa, who suffered interiorly, not visible to others.

I just read the letter you talked about from the USCCB, “When I call for help”. I now know that it is OK for me to move out of the house. I have been struggling and suffering over that issue. I wish there were more resources for support in the diocese of After I get on my feet again, I would love to know how I could start an outreach here.

But anyway, thank you, thank you, thank you, for sharing your message. I was believing that God wants me to suffer.