On Monday of this week Pope Francis wrote a letter to the whole church about the sexual abuse crisis following shocking revelations from the United States, South America and elsewhere.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has written in response:

“As a priest and bishop, I have found the last few weeks both shocking and distressing.

The plain and detailed disclosure of the extent of the abuse of children which has taken place in various parts of our Church, over so many years, has been so painful to follow and to take to heart. Yet to do so is absolutely necessary.

The initial response of Pope Francis was that of 'sorrow and shame'. I fully share that response.

I am so sorry for the hurt that has been caused, primarily to those whose lives have been radically damaged by childhood abuse, to their families, and to those who know personally a deep sense of trust that has been betrayed.

I am utterly ashamed that this evil has, for so long, found a place in our house, our Church. This evil has particular abhorrence because not only is it a terrible abuse of power, but also because, in its evil, it both employs and destroys the very goodness of faith and trust in God. As a Father in this House, I bear this shame in a direct way, for it is the direct responsibility of a father to protect his household from harm, no matter how difficult and complex that might be.

On Monday, Pope Francis, our Holy Father, addressed a letter to all members of the Church. Please urge your people to read it.

The Pope's Letter begins with a quotation from St Paul: 'If one member suffers, all suffer together with it' (1 Cor. 12.26). In doing so, he reflects on the ways in which we have paid insufficient attention to the suffering of those who have been abused, and on the ways in which we have to tackle this together, starting with the renewal of holiness which comes only with prayer and penitence.

Let us read this Letter over and over again. It has so much to give us.”

The Popes Letter on the sexual abuse crisis is attached to this weeks newsletter