

May 2, 2019

My Dear Clergy, Consecrated Religious, and Faithful of the Diocese of Memphis,

In light of the recent questions I have received from our parishes about the priest sex abuse scandals across our country, I want to refer the faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis to my letter addressing the issue from my previous diocese, the Catholic Diocese of Alexandria.

Currently, I am in the process of getting to know the people on the Memphis Diocesan Review Board. I have asked our review board to implement a similar examination process I put in place in the Diocese of Alexandria. I assure the people of the Memphis Diocese that we are taking all of the necessary steps to address your concerns. As your Bishop, I promise to do everything in my power to safeguard our children and youth and to help those who are victims of abuse. We must be transparent and bring to light any wrong doings of the past so healing can take place.

If you are a victim of sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency. Sexual abuse is a serious crime and must be treated as such. If you would like more information or are in need of assistance, please contact our Victims' Assistance Coordinator at (901) 652-4066.

Letter to the Faithful of the Diocese of Alexandria

February 6, 2019

Like many of you, I was horrified and scandalized to read the results of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report published in the summer of 2018 detailing the history of sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy against minors over so many decades. In the 1980s, the public prosecution of Fr. Gilbert Gauthé of the Diocese of Lafayette shined a light into the darkness of this evil in the life of the Church.

Since the adoption of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in 2002, the 'Dallas Charter', our diocese has urged victims of clergy sexual abuse of minors to come forward and many have. In the last sixteen years our Diocesan Permanent Review Board, composed of both laity and clergy, has reviewed all allegations made against clerics, diocesan and religious, and laity, living and deceased. Counseling and pastoral care have been offered to all who have come forward and in some cases, financial settlements were made.

As Bishop of Alexandria, I have promised to do everything in my power to safeguard our children and youth and to help those abused in the past. To aid in the healing process, in August of 2018, I ordered an examination of all our files dating back to the establishment of the Diocese of Natchitoches in 1853. A system of examination was established by which every file held by our Diocese of Alexandria would be reviewed by two sets of examiners: one comprised of the chancellor and vice-chancellor and one comprised of laity from our Permanent Review Board and other lay readers appointed by me.

To insure the most thorough process of examination in these cases, a special ad-hoc committee of the Review Board was established to review all the case histories of the Review Board from its inception up to the present day, along with all the information gleaned from the file review. This was done with a view to publish a list of the names of those clergy (bishops, priests and deacons), living and deceased, who we believe could be credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors.

In publishing this list, it is not our intent to re-victimize those who have already been so wounded by the actions of some clerics who served in our diocese over the past one hundred sixty-five years. This evil can only be purged through a vigilant process that is transparent to the public. Our response must demonstrate the highest levels of honesty and scrutiny.

I believe, together with all the members of the Permanent Review Board that we have done what we can to present as truthful and as thorough a record of the alleged instances of sexual abuse by clerics against minors during our long history. I know that this list may be incomplete, not because we have held anything back, but because this kind of evil is perpetrated in secret and out of fear and shame some may not have been able to come forward.

The names that are published below are those of clergy, diocesan and religious, living and deceased, whom the Permanent Review Board unanimously believes have been or could be credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor. If any allegation is made against a living cleric, national and diocesan protocols, in place since 2002, become applicable. When this occurs, the police are notified and our Victims' Assistance Coordinator begins his service to the victim while an assessor begins an investigation for the Permanent Review Board.

Some of the names below are of living clerics. Such cases have been brought forward for review according to national and diocesan protocols and procedures. However, the great majority of the names listed below are of clergy who were deceased at the time allegations were made or their files were reviewed. On examination, in regard to these deceased clerics, enough written evidence was reviewed case by case to believe that accusations against them are, in all likelihood, credible.

While this process of review and publication is not a declaration of guilt, it is our best assessment of all the evidence available to us at this time. We believe that publicly listing these names is a matter of justice if we are to help the victims and the Church we love and serve. It is our continued hope that anyone who has been abused will come forward to speak the truth and seek the healing that all desire.

If you are a victim of sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency. Sexual abuse is a serious crime and must be treated as such. If you would like more information or are in need of assistance, please contact our Victims' Assistance Coordinator.

Along with the need for justice, we must, at the same time, seek the healing grace that can come only from Our Savior who has ransomed us from the darkness of sin and death. Remembering Christ, Who is our Light, I ask all of us to continue to be vigilant in our efforts to safeguard our children and youth.