

6 October 2018

His Excellency

Most Reverend Timothy L. Doherty

Bishop of Lafayette in Indiana

Chairman, Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

3211 4th Street NE

Washington, D.C. 20017

Your Excellency,

Thank you for your service and leadership on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as Chairman of the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. There is no more critical issue facing the Church today in the United States than the clergy sexual abuse crisis.

We, the Bishops of the Missouri Province, wish to convey to you and your Committee our thoughts on the upcoming plenary assembly of bishops. We wish to express our support for some of the action items contained in the Administrative Committee statement released on 19 September 2018 following Cardinal Daniel DiNardo's meeting with the Holy Father. However, we fear these measures will not be enough in either substance or timeliness to meet the demands that this pastoral crisis presents.

We are heartbroken over the abuse of power which is at the center of the sexual abuse scandal of our Church. While remaining firmly rooted in our faith, hope and charity, we must pay attention to that which threatens our communion with one another.

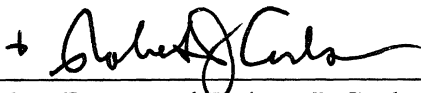
Transparency, accountability, and genuine reform in the way in which the Church handles issues of the abuse of power by the hierarchy are required.

We must keep at the forefront the survivors of the horrendous evil that was perpetrated against children, minors, and seminarians, who suffered greatly and whose faith in the Church, in many cases, has been destroyed. A culture of silence and cover-up by the hierarchy has brought the Church to this moment of crisis.

We ask your assistance in sharing the enclosed *Statement of the Missouri Province of Bishops Regarding Clergy Sexual Abuse and the Abuse of Power by the Hierarchy* with all the bishops of the United States as they prepare for the November Plenary Assembly. There is growing expectation among the clergy and laity that this momentous occasion will provide the opportunity for our country's bishops to respond decisively to the most

critical issue facing our Church today, which is impeding other vital elements of the Church's mission. We hope the enclosed *Statement* will assist the bishops in coming together to speak with one voice, and at the same time, provide a sense of direction from the conference for further actions that could be taken by individual bishops, USCCB committees and USCCB leadership following the November Assembly.

With assurances of our prayerful support through intercession of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our national Patroness, we are

+ 

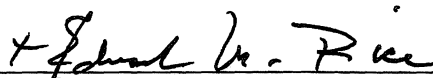
Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis

+ 

Most Reverend James V. Johnston
Bishop of Kansas City—St. Joseph

+ 

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight
Bishop of Jefferson City

+ 

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice
Bishop of Springfield—Cape Girardeau

+ 

Most Reverend Mark S. Rivituso
Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis

STATEMENT OF THE MISSOURI PROVINCE OF BISHOPS

Regarding Clergy Sexual Abuse and the Abuse of Power by the Hierarchy

- 1) We affirm our loyalty to and communion with the Holy Father, which serve, in part, as the very purpose of this statement. Our desire is to follow the Holy Father's past encouragement of honesty and humility in pursuing truthful answers to serious questions that are in the hearts of so many people.
- 2) Many of our people feel that there has been a breach of trust between the Church in the United States and the Holy See over the Archbishop McCarrick scandal and the consequent refusal to take immediate action for those responsible. This breach of trust is already catastrophic and endangers the very communion of the Church.
- 3) The McCarrick scandal has shaken not only the confidence of Catholics, but also of others who look to our Church for moral guidance. It is our moral obligation to acknowledge the negative consequences of a pastoral strategy of silence and inaction in the face of such a horrific scandal that is so widely known. The very credibility of the Church has already been seriously damaged by a persistent silence and inaction over many decades.
- 4) The immediate acceptance of resignations from all hierarchs who voluntarily resign because of their complicit action or inaction in the Archbishop McCarrick scandal would regain credibility and trust.
- 5) We support the action items contained in the Statement from the USCCB Administrative Committee released on 19 September 2018, namely:
 - Establishment of a third-party hot-line for complaints of sexual abuse by a bishop;
 - Development of policies to impose restrictions on bishops who have been removed or resigned for allegations of sexual abuse of a minor or sexual misconduct with an adult;
 - Support for a full investigation into the Archbishop McCarrick scandal, utilizing lay experts in relevant fields.
- 6) On behalf of our people, we recommend a complete and transparent investigation into Archbishop McCarrick's advancement in responsibilities and how he continued to function as a Cardinal when his misconduct with seminarians and others was known. For transparency, the investigators must therefore include

competent laity. For this investigation to be credible, the investigators must be given complete access by the proper authorities to the appropriate files held by the Holy See at the Secretariat of State and the U.S. Apostolic Nunciature, as well as the chanceries of the Archdioceses of New York, Newark, and Washington, D.C., and the Diocese of Metuchen.

7) In keeping with Article 7 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*, all dioceses and eparchies should release the names of all known clerics and consecrated religious who have a credible and substantiated accusation of sexually abusing a minor or vulnerable adult, and who were performing authorized Catholic ministry in their diocese at the time of the abuse.

8) Likewise, bishops should individually mandate the U.S. authority of each religious institute, society of apostolic life, or secular institute authorized to have ministries in their diocese to comply with the *Charter* and release names of their members who have a substantiated accusation.

9) The *Charter* must be revisited to strengthen the Church's ability to address the sexual abuse crisis. In particular, bishops must be held accountable by their inclusion in the *Charter*.

10) We bishops need to publicly renew our commitment to utilizing the charisms of the laity in our exercise of pastoral governance as bishops. We cannot solve this crisis on our own. We need the laity to help us.