



## Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Cardinal

October 23, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you are aware, we are in the midst of a child sexual abuse crisis that is impacting the Church on the local, national and international levels. The Church has been gravely wounded by the abuse crisis and we must begin the healing process by eliminating the evil of sexual abuse. I understand your anger and frustration during this most challenging time - a challenging time in the life of the Church. I also understand the call of the faithful and the call of victims of these horrific crimes for less words and more action to address this crisis. It is in answering this plea that I am writing to inform you of an important decision.

On October 10, 2018, it was announced that the Bishops of Texas have each agreed to join the Diocese of Fort Worth in publishing a list of any bishops, priests (diocesan and religious) or deacons who have been credibly accused of abuse of a minor while serving in ministry in our respective dioceses since at least 1950. At the recent meeting of the Bishops of Texas in Austin (which I joined by telephone from Rome during my engagement at the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment), the Texas bishops agreed on jointly releasing the names as part of ongoing work to protect children from sexual abuse and promote healing and a restoration of trust in the Church.

As I shared in the statement of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston on October 10, this is an action in response to the faithful's call for greater accountability and transparency. Every bishop in our state has made a statement expressing his concern for all who have been hurt and I want to express my personal sorrow at such fundamental violations of trust that have happened. We are completely committed to eradicating the evil of sexual abuse in the Church and promoting healing among the faithful and those injured by this crime. Thus, we reached this decision after much discussion, reflection and prayer and believe it is a critical step toward restoring the trust of the faithful both in the Church and its leaders. To date, there are over 55 dioceses across the United States that have either published a similar list or have announced their plans to do so.

With 8.5 million Catholics and 1,320 Catholic parishes in Texas, the endeavor to compile a comprehensive list of clergy who have been credibly accused of sexual abusing a minor represents a major project. All dioceses will publish their lists by January 31, 2019. The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is engaging the former FBI

Executive Assistant Director, Dr. Kathleen McChesney, and her firm, Kinsale Management Consulting, to conduct an independent and in-depth review of our files and records so that the list will be as accurate and complete as possible. As part of the ongoing effort by our dioceses to provide an even safer environment for children, these lists will be updated in the future as new information becomes available. We are also asking Kinsale to examine how Archdiocesan leadership handles allegations of abuse when they were received and how we can improve our processes.

Since the 2002 Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was adopted by U.S. Bishops, there has been a drastic decrease in cases of abuse due to increased scrutiny, procedures, and overall commitment to vigilance and prevention adopted by clergy, religious, and lay people alike. And yet the Church can and must do better.

The Holy Father recently emphasized the absolute necessity of taking steps to ensure that the faithful are protected from sexual abuse. As I have previously noted, Pope Francis echoes the call of Christ to be with survivors in their time of need. Let us respond simply, "Yes, Lord!"

The path of healing begins with prayer and definitive actions. My brother bishops and I ask for your prayers as we carry out this most essential task. May God's mercy show us the way to salvation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+Daniel Cardinal DiNardo*

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo  
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston