



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Cardinal

September 7, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The last few months have been very difficult in the life of the Church. With the confirmed sexual abuse of minors and seminarians by then Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and his removal from the College of Cardinals, as well as the publication of a detailed report of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy in six dioceses of the State of Pennsylvania, a genuine state of moral and spiritual crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States has hit us all with great force. Following these news reports, I have received many letters and it is clear our people have been scandalized by this grave wound, especially as it has deeply hurt so many innocent little ones, the abused and the survivors. I know you are suffering and have been filled with anger and rage. I share your anger and rage. You likely have many questions, which have only been expanded in light of the recently published letter of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former papal nuncio to the United States. As I shared in my statement as President of United States Catholic Conference of Bishops on August 27, 2018, "The questions raised deserve answers that are conclusive and based on evidence. Without those answers, innocent men may be tainted by false accusation and the guilty may be left to repeat sins of the past."

In 2002 the problems were mostly related to the priests who abused; in 2018 the problems are more focused on the responsibility or lack thereof of the bishops and on their failures of moral leadership. The Body of Christ has been lacerated and bishops did not care for the wounded.

Our archdiocese acted promptly in response to the Dallas Charter and we must continue and strengthen our response. The bishops must become more accountable and in a way that is clear. As President I have been working these past weeks with bishops, consultants, clergy and laity, to be prepared for the USCCB's Administrative Committee meeting this month with a series of proposals, practical steps and prayer and repentance to bring to the whole body of Bishops in November. I hope you will pray for all of us in this endeavor. The issues involved are delicate but we must do this well and call all to accountability.

I realize that in spite of the progress made since 2002 that we, the bishops of the United States, have failed you. We can and must do better. In the meanwhile, the Holy Father has asked us all to open our eyes and our hearts to all those suffering. We will follow his wise counsel both practically in action and contemplatively in prayer.

I conclude these words to you with the words with which I closed my August 27 statement: "The more she is buffeted by storms, the more I am reminded that the Church's firm foundation is Jesus Christ. The failures of men cannot diminish the light of the Gospel. Lord, by the help of your mercy, show us the way to salvation."

With blessings in the Lord, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Daniel Cardinal DiNardo

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston