

Audio message from Cardinal Cupich to be played at masses.

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

You may know that Pope Francis has called a meeting in Rome, of the presidents of bishops' conferences and other leaders in the Church from around the world to address the crisis of clerical sex abuse of minors. As I work with others to organize this meeting, I want to tell you that your concerns are close to my heart. I truly appreciate the input I have heard and received from you. I will carry your concerns and insights with me as I go to Rome.

At the same time, I know how hard these past few months have been for you. I understand the anger and disappointment many feel as the Church suffers from the scandal of clergy sexual abuse, and the mishandling by some church leaders.

Victim-survivors have been courageous in telling their stories. Listening to them, taking measures to protect children and holding everyone accountable is the only response to make.

We are and have been doing all of this in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and will continue to provide support for victims, to report every allegation of clerical sexual abuse to civil authorities, and to permanently remove anyone from ministry who is credibly accused.

I invite you to learn more about what the Archdiocese does to protect children, heal victims and make sure all priests and church leaders are held accountable, by visiting our website heal.archchicago.org. I've also asked pastors to print the website address in your bulletins.

Pope Francis understands that abuse in the Church is a global problem that needs a global solution. The Holy Father's aim in calling the meeting at the end of this month is to make sure that every bishop in the world takes personal responsibility and is held accountable for how he handles these matters. But, the pope also intends to make clear to all bishops the concrete steps for complying with this agenda. Getting this right is the priority.

I also want to tell you how sorry I am, for the harm done to victims, but also the harm done to you, the faithful who also have been deeply wounded by all of this. You continue to be in my prayers and I ask for yours, not just for me and the success of the February meeting, but especially for our priests and all who work for the church faithfully during these very challenging times. They need our support now more than ever. God Bless you all.