

Over the past few days, I have read intently many of the concrete proposals that bishops and lay leaders have put forward to address the past failures in leadership and to strengthen the measures already in place ensuring that our children, young people and vulnerable adults are safe and can flourish in our midst. Some of the proposals are innovative and merit greater reflection. It is my hope and prayer that through honest dialogue and careful reflection, the Church's clerical and lay leaders on every level can create a plan to bring purification and renewal to our Church.

Despite the raw emotions that we may be feeling during this difficult time, I would encourage us to resist the impulse to despair or dismiss the sacrificial work of so many good priests whom you have come to know in your life of faith. For our good priests are also suffering because of the sins of their brothers.

It is also important that we not lose sight of the tremendous protections now in place in our diocese and other dioceses across the country. For over fifteen years, our Safe Environment programs have been effective in preventing abuse, encouraging early reporting, and ensuring swift removal of perpetrators through the Diocesan Review Board. Contact information for our Safe Environment Office can be found on the diocesan website and in the back of the Church. In our Diocese, we have also established a Misconduct Review Board, composed principally of lay members, to review any allegations of adult misconduct on the part of clergy.

Perhaps we have never been so aware of our frailty. Yet, while this is a serious time of challenge and crisis in the Church, there is always hope. I don't come to you with an easy solution to a complex evil, but I believe that if we move forward in the solidarity of faith, a spirit of transparency and commitment to absolute accountability, we will renew the Church.

My friends, I am praying for you and your families each day at Mass during this difficult time. Please pray for me and my brother priests as well.

May the great Mother of God, our protector and intercessor, accompany us as we move forward to purify and renew our Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport