



**OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL
1011 FIRST AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022**

Dear Family of the Archdiocese of New York:

Over this difficult summer, I've done a lot of listening. Many of you have told me that you are upset, angry, bewildered, and frustrated about the ongoing crisis of sexual abuse in the Church. I am not afraid to say that so am I. This has been a painful period for all Catholics. Some of you may have heard me talk about my own mother, now 90 years old and in assisted living, telling me that she's embarrassed, as a Catholic, to go into the dining room with her fellow residents.

Most stinging, though, is hearing, "Cardinal Dolan, we are beginning to lose trust in you bishops." And without that trust, I don't have a lot left.

Yes, since 2002, the Church has made great strides in combating the crime and sin of sexual abuse of minors, especially by "zero tolerance" of any guilty priest, deacon, or bishop, and by reaching out to victim-survivors, who must remain our first concern. I will be announcing some new initiatives today on how to enhance our efforts to protect children as well as vulnerable adults. I will be putting my statement on my blog at www.cardinaldolan.org, and I hope you take the time to learn about what we're doing, and that this becomes a good first step in strengthening that trust. But this brief letter is not meant to defend our record or provide a comprehensive list of programs and abuse prevention efforts. There will be time for that later.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that, as your archbishop, I am with you, and I am committed to *transparency, accountability, and action*. That's what I've heard you request.

Last week, I had the sad duty of celebrating the funeral Mass of a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, who died way-too-soon at the age of 49. There were several dozen priests present, and, as you would probably expect, the Church's current crisis was a major topic of discussion.

As the procession made its way down the center aisle at the start of Mass, I was moved and inspired by the huge number of people who were there to pray for the repose of the soul of a man they knew to be a good and faithful priest, and to thank God for the gift of his priesthood. The congregation even stood in a prolonged ovation for him at the end of Mass. "Cardinal Dolan," the pastor said to me, "The people here loved Father Charlie. They love their faith and their priests. They just want to know that the bishops understand the problem and are acting correctly."

A good reminder.

Might I ask for your prayers — first and foremost for the victim-survivors of abuse, but also for all of our good and faithful priests and deacons who are suffering, and, finally, for me as your archbishop that the Holy Spirit will guide me as, together, we face this current crisis.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Tim. Card. Dolan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

+Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York

Statement of Cardinal Timothy Dolan Press Conference – September 20, 2018

Good morning, everybody! Welcome! Thanks for your company and your interest. And blessed Holy Days to those of the Jewish community!

Summer officially ends Saturday, and I, for one, am glad it's over!

Many of our people and priests are calling it the "Summer of hell" for our Catholic family: we had the scandal of Theodore McCarrick; then came the nauseating detail of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury of horrific abuse of minors by priests in the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's; then the controversy around the Archbishop Vigano letter.

This has all left our people bewildered, frustrated, and angry; our good and faithful priests demoralized; and us bishops somber and contrite. Autumn can't come fast enough!

Over this rough summer I've written and commented some, but I've mostly *listened*, read, reflected, and *prayed*. From my people, my clergy, and from the wider community, most of whom respect and appreciate the Church, I hear that they want *accountability, transparency, and action*.

I also hear them honestly say to me something that stings me very much: "Cardinal Dolan, we've been so let down that we're *beginning to lose trust* in you bishops."

If I lose the trust of my people and this community, I don't have a lot left.

Accountability, transparency, action, and trust...

Meet *Judge Barbara Jones* who will now become our *Special Counsel and Independent Reviewer*. Many of you know her already, as her efforts in law enforcement, jurisprudence, and community reform are acclaimed. A federal judge, a former prosecutor, known for her wisdom and fairness, I have asked Judge Jones to help me and this archdiocese, and I'm grateful she's accepted.

Here's what I've asked her to do: an exhaustive study of our policies, procedures, and protocols on how we deal with any accusation that comes to us about an alleged abuse of a young person by a priest, deacon, or a bishop. I have promised her complete access to our records, personnel, and to me personally.

Judge, our people keep asking me: "Hasn't the Church done anything about this the last twenty years?" Yes, I reply, we have, and I detail our strict policies on reporting all cases to the DA, outside investigations, referral to our independent lay review board, and "zero tolerance" of guilty priests, with their names published; I've assured them that no priest against whom there has been a substantiated allegation is now in ministry; I've explained our background checks on all clergy – including bishops – and all teachers, workers, staff, and volunteers; I've explained our successful "safe environment" training for all, priests included. I've mentioned Sister Eileen Clifford, who does a superb job as Victims Assistance Coordinator. By the way, Sister Eileen can be reached at victimsassistance@archny.org or by calling 646-794-2949.

But, Judge, I'm afraid many don't believe me. I'm asking you to conduct an independent, scrupulous review to see if there are gaps, if there are things we should be doing and are not, and, hopefully, to affirm that we are doing our best to live up to the promises we bishops made to our people in 2002.

I need your help in some other areas, too. Would you help me develop workable protocols for accusations of inappropriate behavior by anyone abusing his or her position of authority? Even our many critics do admit we've made a lot of progress in dealing with abuse of minors; now we need vigilance and a sound policy for responding to allegations of abuses of position and power.

Would you confirm my belief and hope that the *Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program*, led by Ken Feinberg and Camille Biros, that has resulted in a sense of fair resolution and compensation with almost 300 victim-survivors in this archdiocese alone, and has now been adopted by other dioceses in the state, is indeed an effective initiative in service to the victims? You may know that the IRCP has also helped us uncover previously unknown cases of misbehaving priests -- like Theodore McCarrick -- who are now permanently removed from ministry. I am eager to propose this proven program for all institutions – church, state, private, educational – to adopt in outreach to the victim-survivors. Our attention and sensitivity as a state and wider community must be to the *victim-survivors*, not to institutions, and I'm hoping that you find that the IRCP is a very good model.

I've given you a lot to do, Judge. But, I need your help if I am going to respond to my people's plea for *accountability, transparency, and action*. I look forward to receiving your recommendations and your insights, and I pledge that I will take them all with utmost seriousness. And I want you to hold my feet to the fire, if you feel that I am not following through on the recommendations that you make.

Most of all, I'm praying that your careful review and hard questions will help my good people renew their trust in the Church they love and the leaders they want to believe.

Thanks, Judge. Will you help?