



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LEXINGTON

THE CATHOLIC CENTER

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

August 16, 2018

Dear Friends in Christ,

In recent weeks, we have heard very disturbing and painful revelations about abusive behavior from former cardinal Theodore McCarrick and, in the last few days, the horrifying descriptions of many cases of clerical abuse and the efforts of bishops to hide these facts and not respond to the victims. The faithful of the Church have an absolute right to expect and to demand more from their leadership. There is anger, confusion, betrayal, hurt, fear, and a host of other reactions to news that we wish we did not have to hear. I offer my own sincere apology first and foremost to all who have been abused by representatives and leaders of our Church and also to all who have their faith tested by these actions and the failure to respond to the needs of the victims.

I pray and ask your prayers for the healing and well-being of the victims. As you know we have given a great deal of effort to providing a safe environment for youth and vulnerable adults since 2002 and the promulgation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Nevertheless, we learned of events from the distant or recent past and must make sure that these policies are enforced, and that offenders are held responsible, including the bishops ourselves. The Catholic Church in the United States must constantly revise and improve our policies as well as investigate what went wrong in the past so that the suffering and betrayal are not repeated. If you are frustrated because you have heard all of this before, I share your frustration and will do what I can to contribute to an institutional Church more faithful to the example and teachings of Jesus.

If anyone has suffered abuse by a representative of the Church, please contact the Victims' Assistance Coordinator of the Diocese of Lexington by calling (859)338-5695 or by email at victimsassistance@cdlex.org. If you know people who have been abused, encourage and/or help them to make such a report. To review the diocese's safe environment and reporting policies, please visit the diocesan website at: <https://cdlex.org/safe-environment>.

Please join me in praying for the renewal and purification that is needed in our Church and in the work of providing the safe and appropriate environment that all have a right to expect from the Church. It is only by faithfulness to Christ and a firm commitment to the truth and to transparency that will allow us to make progress. With God's help, let us strive to be the healing and reconciling presence in the world that Jesus intends his Church to be.

Peace and all good,

Most Reverend John Stowe, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Lexington