

From Bishop Timothy L. Doherty

A message to the people of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana

About one month ago, I addressed you in response to the news about Archbishop Theodore McCarrick and in anticipation of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report. Since then, that report and many other accusations and letters have been made public. The news of the last few weeks has been discouraging, to say the least. The aftermath of these headlines is only just beginning, and the turmoil and angst is felt by all. Because of these recent reports, as your bishop, I feel it is necessary and important for me to address the following points:

- 1) The accountability of American Catholic bishops. I can tell you that a reform of policy and practices is under way. I am part of talks about how this will be configured. Serious discussions started when we became aware of Archbishop McCarrick's abuses.
- 2) Cardinal Daniel DiNardo's Aug. 16, 2018, statement is public. It provides a basic outline of a response to questions about Archbishop McCarrick's career and advancements. It does not range to all other issues because we have to get the response to this "right" in order to know that we can adequately address other challenges. So this effort is benefitting from exceptional focus in the coming weeks, and asks for a visitation from Rome and lay investigative experts from the United States. Cardinal DiNardo's statement makes clear that our efforts will be more fully defined — and communicated — as administrative and assembly meetings make progress in September and November. But the work has already started because urgency and integrity demand it.
- 3) My public denunciation of Pennsylvania abuses, negligence and omissions: I cannot state strongly enough my disgust for what happened, nor my shock and sorrow for the many victims and survivors. The evils that we read about in the 40th Statewide Investigative Grand Jury's report have come into the light. The report variously describes the results of human weakness or malice, Church administrative mistakes, a lack of bravery in naming what was truly happening, and combinations of all three.

The bishops and priests who had no part in the evildoing are now suffering a humiliating aftermath. The men and women in religious orders who had no part in the evildoing are suffering. The lay faithful are stunned and disappointed. Reactions vary from stunned sorrow to a hopefulness that now some real work and healing can begin.

- 4) We pastors are encouraged to speak in our churches. Earlier in the year, I related an encounter at one of my out-of-town meetings. A mother of grade school-aged children reported that she and her husband had not heard their pastor, in his own voice, support diocesan safe environment protocols and processes that he himself is subject to since long before their children were born. Bulletin announcements are not enough. I have supported all the pastors in our diocese in their efforts to speak clearly about the safe environment protocols and processes that have been in place since 2002. I have encouraged our pastors to speak in their own voice to show support for child safety protocols. My message, and that of our pastors, is that we support and participate in the background check and periodic trainings we are required to do. It hurts that anyone would

question our personal commitment to the safety of children and young people. We trust that each of you shares in the same commitment to be part of the Church's mission to respect and protect people of every age. May we continue to encourage each other as we strive to live and pray with an integrity worthy of God.

5) Since 2002, the dioceses and religious orders in the United States have made quite significant measurable improvements in safe environments. All of our diocesan policies for the safety of minors can be found online at <https://dol-in.org/safe-environment-1>

The latest annual national report on Protection of the Young, released June 1, 2018, is available at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-andaction/child-and-youthprotection/upload/2017-Report.pdf>. This is the 15th annual report that reflects audited efforts by dioceses in the United States.

6) To make a report of an allegation of recent abuse of a minor, or even to report a previously unreported allegation of abuse from years ago, please use these contact numbers:

- Child Protective Services, 800-800-5556;
- The Office of the Vicar General, 765-269-4601;
- The Office of Victim Assistance Ministry, 765-464-4988;
- The Conduct in Ministry Officer, 765-463-2242.