



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

August 22, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Pennsylvania Grand Jury report, published last week, presents horrific numbers, and heart-wrenching accounts of abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy against children and vulnerable people. It also reveals that some bishops failed in their duty to protect the most vulnerable.

The report is from another country and about other Catholic dioceses, but these differences in geography and jurisdiction provide little consolation. There are no adequate words to offer in response to what has happened. The evil that has been done by some members of the clergy has deeply affected us all.

In our own 60-year history, the Diocese of St. Catharines has had to face up to crimes and sins of clergy sexual abuse which have caused grave harm to innocent children and vulnerable people, and has severely impacted our Catholic community. For this I am deeply sorry.

As Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines, I am committed to providing a safe environment for those under my care. This includes ensuring that the procedures in our diocesan misconduct/abuse policy are followed so that justice is served for victims and perpetrators of abuse according to God's law, canon law and civil law. This also means supporting the faithful priests, deacons and laity who minister in our diocese, and ensuring proper screening and ongoing formation for all who minister, work and volunteer in the parishes and organizations within the diocese.

Any allegation of abuse or grave misconduct by any priest, deacon, employee or volunteer will be addressed as promptly and thoroughly as possible. The complete text of our diocesan policy, including contact information, is available on our website www.saintcd.com.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we read that the disciples were in a boat in the midst of a storm and Jesus came to them walking on the water. He told them not to be afraid. Peter tried to walk to Jesus on the water; however, he began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus. In the midst of this current storm we must not be afraid. Let us keep our eyes on the Lord for He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Let us continue to pray for the victims and survivors of clergy sexual abuse. Pray also for all members of the Church. May our just and merciful God bring healing and hope during these difficult times.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines