

December 10, 2018

Dear VOTFNJ brothers and sisters,

The self-inflicted wound of the clerical sexual abuse crisis has brought our beloved Church to the point of implosion--at least the hierarchical clerical culture of our Church. It is, in one way, a good thing! This means that the wound has been exposed and now the healing may begin; the rebuilding of the Church can commence. What is good can be retained and what has gone off course can be rooted out and left behind.

As members of the laity, committed to our baptismal promises, we can—and must—participate in the rebuilding of our beloved local New Jersey church. In this packet of materials you will find helpful resources, appropriate contact information, and informative background articles. May we suggest a few things that we all can do to move the healing forward?

1. Pray that the whole Church may be converted to the mind of Jesus who put children (and young people) first in the Kingdom of God.
2. Write to the Apostolic Nuncio to the USA and to your bishops. Encourage them to call a “CONVOCATION OF CATHOLIC LEADERS,” to provide, as Bishop Dennis Sullivan of the Camden Diocese says in the Catholic Star Herald (article included) “a gathering together, listening to each other, and sharing our experiences that will hopefully lead to a renewal of hope and dispelling the spiritual malaise that wears us down.”
3. Stay informed on the issues. Articles included here:
 - OPEN LETTER TO THE US CATHOLIC BISHOPS—Villanova University Task Force on the Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Church
 - 21 THESES—The laity of the Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania;
 - OPEN LETTER TO THE US CATHOLIC BISHOPS—IT’S OVER!—National Catholic Reporter editorial
 - DOUBLE LIVES: THE PERIL OF CLERICAL HYPOCRISY by Kenneth Woodward
4. Subscribe to:
 - THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER, an award winning, independent Catholic newspaper.
www.ncronline.org
 - COMMONWEAL Magazine, a lay led Catholic publication.
www.commonwealmagazine.org
 - AMERICA Magazine, a Jesuit publication.
www.americamagazine.org

5. Report any suspected sexual abuse to your County Prosecutor's Office and your diocese. Contact information included.
6. For your own well-being, read SUGGESTED ACTION PLAN FOR SELF-CARE IN TIMES OF GRIEF AND LOSS by Margaret Pipchick.
7. Find an alternative way to contribute to the good works of the Church rather than giving to the Bishops' Appeal. Appropriate to our own mission as VOTFNJ, we can suggest:
 - **Road to Recovery**, which provides compassionate counseling and referral services to victims of sexual abuse.
www.road-to-recovery.org
 - **Voice of the Faithful**, which first opened up the voice of the laity on the issue of clerical sexual abuse in Boston in 2002.
www.votf.org
 - **Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests**, the largest, oldest and most active support group for women and men wounded by religious and institutional authorities.
www.snapnetwork.org
 - **Bishop Accountability**, which documents the abuse crisis in the Catholic Church.
www.bishopsaccountability.org

We sincerely hope for your continuing effort as we work together to rebuild Christ's Church,

Theresa Padovano and Carole Rogers
Co-facilitators--VOTFNJ.ORG

Suggested Action Plan for self care in times of grief and loss

We are all in some form experiencing grief related to the recent uncovering of massive sexual abuse by priests and former Cardinal McCarrick and there is more to come. Everyone experiences grief in different ways and it is important to be aware of your own ways of reacting. Grief takes many forms and it takes as long as it takes to heal. However it is important to remember that we as human beings are resilient. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back which is not only the ability to cope and recover but to change and be able to reflect on different priorities that may arise from the situation.

Recognize that as whole human beings we have a spiritual, physical, emotional, social and cognitive parts to ourselves. When we are painfully suffering or severely stressed, our whole being reacts and we might do things that are not our usual pattern.

Become AWARE of any changes in behavior as a result of uncomfortable feelings. Feelings may be anger, sadness, despair, loneliness, anxiety, fear, mistrust etc. We may look outside of ourselves for relief of these uncomfortable feelings or issues such as difficulty sleeping or increased agitation may arise. Trying to deal with such issues through increased drinking, smoking, over-spending, isolation from normal activities or increased use of prescription medication are attempts at self medicating to soothe disturbing feelings. These feelings are real but not necessarily reality. These are our bodies reaction to life as it comes to us.

Physically EXPLORE healthy activities:

- Deep breathing - breathe deeply into the belly, hold, and exhale deeply, hold, and begin again. put a timer on and do for 2 minutes.
- Any form of exercise is helpful. Yoga is a way to help bodily stress. Walking for 20 minutes a day. Walks in nature. These help with depression.
- Eat a healthy diet. Avoid a lot of white sugar. It can depress the physical body.
- If no relief consider seeking the help of a therapist.

RECOGNIZE that keeping thoughts or beliefs about what should be happening keeps us in a feeling state of being threatened and fearful. Be gentle with yourself, don't be judgemental. Notice what is happening and breathe. There are time when things cannot be controlled. See what IS happening that might be positive. (The Holy Spirit may be transforming the old hierarchical Church by purging it of the people who have kept it bogged down.)

CREATE a safe space within yourself by thinking about a place you feel safe and love to be. Bring it inside and go there and breathe, put on comforting music. Meditate or do centering prayer or whatever gives you a feel that God is with you. God is in EVEN THIS. One theory of chaos is that things need to fall apart before they can be renewed.

Do not keep yourself immersed in the news. Take breaks. Read nourishing literature. Write out your thoughts and feelings for 10 minutes, not editing it and then throw it away. Write a Letter to a Bishop, destroy it or mail it depending on what feels right to you.

REACH OUT to people who feel safe and support your beliefs - Voice of the Faithful, Future Church, Roman Catholic Women's Conference, Local retreat centers. Small Eucharistic Communities may be the most nourishing and supportive at this time. There are sites on the internet that can be very supportive of spiritual life i.e. Richard Rohr, Catholic Women Preach.

Helpful Addresses

Apostolic Nuncio to the USA

His Excellency Archbishop Christopher Pierre
3339 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008-3610

Archdiocese of Newark

Joseph W. Cardinal Tobin, C.Ss.R.
171 Clifton Avenue
Newark, NJ 07104-0500

Diocese of Paterson

Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli
777 Valley Road
Clifton NJ 07013

Diocese of Metuchen

Most Rev. James F. Checchio
146 Metlars Lane
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Diocese of Trenton

Most Rev. David M. O'Connell, C.M.
PO Box 5147
Trenton, NJ 08638

Diocese of Camden

Most Rev. Dennis J. Sullivan
831 Market Street
Camden, NJ 08102

FOR REPORTING ANY SUSPECTED SEXUAL ABUSE



THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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OAG Home

Veronica Allende
Director



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 - Specialized Crime
 - Criminal Justice Services:
 - Human Trafficking Taskforce
 - State Medical Examiner
 - Victim / Witness Services
 - Bias Crime
 - Grants
- Division on Civil Rights
- Division of Gaming Enforcement
- Highway Traffic Safety
- Insurance Fraud Prosecutor
- Juvenile Justice Commission
- Division of Law
- NJ Racing Commission
- State Athletic Control Board
- Division of State Police
- Victims of Crime Comp. Office

County Prosecutors' Offices

Select county
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Atlantic

997 Unami Boulevard, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

609-909-7800

[Web site](#)

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Bergen

Bergen County Justice Center, 10 Main Street, Rm.
#215, Hackensack, NJ 07601

201-646-2300

[Web site](#)

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Burlington

Burlington County Courts Complex, 49 Rancocas
Road, P.O. Box 6000, Mount Holly, NJ 08060

609-265-5035

[Web site](#)

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Law Enforcement Resources

Directives / Guidelines

Criminal Justice Services

Highlights



NJ's 12 Most Wanted



Gang Awareness Initiative



State Medical Examiner



NJ Sex Offender Registry



Identity Theft Information



Insurance Fraud
Call: 877-55-FRAUD



Victim / Witness Services



Megan's Law Information



Law Enforcement Resources
including Directives / Guidelines



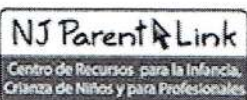
Report Medicaid Fraud Here
or Call 609-292-1272



Victim / Witness Services



NJ Amber Alert Plan
(Child Abduction Alert System)



Camden

25 North 5th Street, 3rd Floor, Camden, NJ 08102

856-225-8400

Web site

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Cape May

4 Moore Road, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

609-465-1135

Web site

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Cumberland

43 Fayette Street, Bridgeton, NJ 08302

856-453-0486 Ext. 115

Web site

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Essex

Essex County Courts Building, 50 West Market Street,
Newark, NJ 07102

973-621-4700

Web site

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Gloucester

Gloucester Justice Complex, Hunter & Euclid Streets,
P.O. Box 623, Woodbury, NJ 08096

856-384-5500

Web site

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Hudson

Hudson Admin. Building, 595 Newark Avenue, 6th
Floor, Jersey City, NJ 07306

201-795-6400

Web site

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Hunterdon

Hunterdon Justice Complex, 65 Park Ave., P.O. Box
756, Flemington, NJ 08822

908-788-1129

Web site

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Mercer

Mercer Court House, P.O. Box 8068, Trenton, NJ
08650

609-989-6309

Web site

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Middlesex

25 Kirkpatrick Street, 3rd Floor, New Brunswick, NJ
08901

732-745-3333

Web site

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Monmouth

71 Monument Park, Freehold, NJ 07728

732-431-7160

Web site

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Morris

Morris Admin. & Records Bldg., P.O. Box 900,
Morristown, NJ 07963

973-285-6200

Web site

Top

Ocean

119 Hooper Avenue, P.O. Box 2191, Toms River, NJ
08754

732-929-2027

Web site

Top

Passaic

401 Grand Street, Paterson, NJ 07505

973-881-4800

Web site

Top

Salem

Fenwick Building, 87 Market Street, P.O. Box 462,
Salem, NJ 08079

856-935-7510 Ext. 8333

Web site

Top

Somerset

40 N. Bridge Street, P.O. Box 3000, Somerville, NJ
08876

908-231-7100

Web site

Top

Sussex

19-21 High Street, Newton, NJ 07860

973-383-1570

Web site

Top

Union

32 Rahway Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07202

908-527-4500

Web site

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Warren

Warren Court House, 413 2nd Street, Belvidere, NJ
07823

908-475-6287

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Links to sites and articles dealing with clergy abuse:

<https://www.nj.gov/oag/clergy-abuse/>

<http://catholicstarherald.org/the-popes-challenge-for-the-church-to-be-more-synodal/>

https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/ethics/news_events/open-letter-to-the-us-catholic-bishops.html

<http://www.goerie.com/assets/PA30664928.PDF>

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/open-letter-us-catholic-bishops-its-over>

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/double-lives>

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/14649/on-the-road-to-emmaus>



5 THESES

Out of love for our Catholic Church and a desire to reform it, we Catholic women and men defend the following steps as necessary actions for the bishops of the United States. We urge our bishops to resolve at their fall 2018 assembly in Baltimore to take these actions or to dispute them with us in the form of an open letter by the first day of the coming liturgical year, December 2, 2018. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

1. **Full transparency:** Release the names of clergy in every diocese found by internal processes to be abusers. Pledge to fully cooperate, without question and without qualification, with all new and ongoing investigations initiated by Attorneys General, local prosecutors, and any other law enforcement bodies, especially when evidence points to abuse by clerics and negligence by those with responsibility over them.
2. **Survivors' Voices:** Create and publicize a permanent and prominent place in every issue of every diocesan newspaper in the country for survivors of clergy sexual abuse to share their stories.
3. **Simple Living:** As a symbolic gesture of the commitment to dismantle clericalism, shed the royal raiment and regalia of the episcopate, wearing the plain black garb and liturgical vestments of a parish priest and spending time in service to the poor and marginalized for the coming liturgical year.
4. **Put Women in Church Leadership:** Ask Pope Francis to restore women to the ordained diaconate, to include women as voting members at meetings of the synod of bishops, to reopen the discussion of women's ordination, and to name women as cardinals at the next consistory and at every consistory going forward until a balance is achieved.
5. **Pray for a Reformed Church:** Require every parish in every diocese to include this prayer, or one based on it, every Sunday in the prayers of the faithful during the next three liturgical years:

"That from this community of gathered people will rise a new church: a church that protects the abused and the marginalized, ministering to all in search of healing; a church that strives continually to overcome every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on gender, race, color, social condition, sexual orientation, language or religion, in order to pave the way for a new future of joy and hope . . . we pray to the Lord."

November 2018