



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND
OREGON

Office of Archbishop Alexander Sample

May 10, 2019

"I am very grateful to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for the *Motu Proprio* which he issued for the universal Church on May 9, the title of which is "*Vos estis lux mundi*" (*You are the light of the world*). Being issued in the form of a *Motu Proprio*, this Apostolic Letter becomes universal law for the Church when it comes into effect on June 1, 2019.

The Holy Father's action validates what I said earlier when the Holy See asked that the U.S. Bishops not move ahead with our own plan of action to address the sexual abuse crisis in the Church at our November meeting last year. Pope Francis wanted a worldwide response to the crisis on the part of the universal Church. This new document does just that.

In reading the document, it seems clear to me that the Commission responsible for putting the *Motu Proprio* together took serious note of the plan of the U.S. Bishops in their drafting of the current document. Our voice was clearly heard, while taking into account the situation of the whole Church throughout the world. The essential elements of the U.S. Bishops plan are clearly present in the document. This includes lay involvement in the investigation of allegations levied against bishops of the Church. Such involvement of the laity is already in place for allegations against priests and deacons according to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms*.

Vos estis lux mundi employs the role of the Metropolitan Archbishop in the investigation of allegations against bishops of his ecclesiastical Province. As Archbishop of the Province of Portland (the dioceses of Oregon, Idaho and Montana), I take this role very seriously. I pledge to fulfill my duty with due diligence, observing the principles of transparency and accountability within the norms of both canon and civil law.

It will now be the task of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to take these new universal norms and adapt and implement them here in the United States. This vitally important work will begin at our June 2019 meeting. We will pick up where we left off, taking into account the provisions of the *Motu Proprio*.

In the meantime, we in the Archdiocese of Portland will remain vigilant and attentive in our response to allegations of sexual abuse in the Church and our loving care for victims/survivors. We must always keep in mind that the victims/survivors of sexual abuse are first in our love, prayers and substantive care.

I ask the prayers of all the clergy, religious and lay faithful of this Archdiocese as we continue to move forward to effectively address this ongoing crisis, doing everything that we can so that no child, young person or vulnerable adult will ever be harmed again, and that swift and effective action will be taken against anyone who would dare harm one of God's children."

Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample
Archbishop of Portland in Oregon