

Walking Together-
How We Move Forward from the Shadow of the Abuse Scandal
- From Father Daniel

Background:

A maxim in the Catholic Church is “the Church is always in need of reform,” and that is so true today. Many of our recent past leaders, and some who still remain in active ministry today, did not exercise their leadership responsibility properly. This poor leadership allowed known clergy sex offenders to be shuffled from one place to another, to simply repeat their destructive behavior with new and unwitting children. Over the summer, more cases of abuse and the disgraceful mishandling were revealed. The clergy as a whole, and the bishops specifically need to come to terms with its consequences and take steps with the laity to ensure nothing like this happens ever again.

Trust with the laity has been broken and needs to be re-established to heal the Universal Church. Re-establishing that trust cannot be done quickly and requires changes at all levels of the Church.

Diocese of Richmond’s response:

In the Diocese of Richmond, Bishop Knestout has started this process by having “listening sessions” with his priests. Meetings were held in each of the three Vicariates. The priests expressed their sense of betrayal, and reflected upon the tremendous amount of pain and suffering by the victims. Additionally, many parishioners even those not directly impacted by the bishops’ actions, have lost faith in their clergy. The majority of our clergy are dedicated, loving people who follow Christ and the teachings of the Church. We must find a way together to rebuild our trust in the Church and the clergy who serve us.

Bishop Knestout has taken these remarks by his priests and others to heart and has begun the journey of trying to regain the trust of the people. He is now following up the “listening sessions” he had with the priests and the Cathedral Mass of Atonement with “listening sessions” and Masses of Atonement in various places throughout the diocese. The “listening session” is for invitees only – each pastor is allowed to bring his active deacons, two members of his Pastoral Council, two members of his Finance Council, two members of his staff, and two at-large members. Ascension’s delegation participated in the “listening session” with the Bishop at Star of the Sea on Friday, October 12th. Afterwards the Bishop lead a Mass of Atonement at 7:30pm, open to everyone.

What we are doing at Church of the Ascension and how you can participate:

- (1) **Pray** for the victims and for the leaders of the Church
- (2) Attend Ascension’s **Town Hall “listening session”** and have your voice heard: **Sunday October 21, 2018 at 2:30pm**
- (3) Attend Ascension’s **Adoration & Mass of Atonement: Friday October 26, 2018 at 6:00 PM Adoration and 7:00 Mass**
- (4) Take an active part in your parish and attend the **Virtus training-** this will make you more aware of potentially dangerous situation.