



## DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

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McRaith Catholic Center | *Office of the Bishop*

August 16, 2018

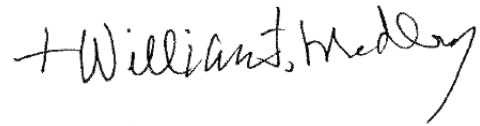
Sin is real. In our own lives and in our contemporary society we may strive to find another word, another way, to portray the willful disdain for God and God's ways. Maybe a word with a little less sting. But sin is real.

I find myself addressing again the embarrassing and shameful reality that the sin of sexual abuse is still being discovered among bishops and priests. It has been sixteen years since the Catholic Church of the United States publicly acknowledged that far too many priests for far too long had acted as sexual predators and harmed young people. In 2002 the bishops of the United States adopted *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in the wake of revelations that hundreds of priests across the country had preyed upon thousands of children and youth. The pledge of the Catholic Church at that time was "promise to protect, pledge to heal." This pledge came about primarily because of the incredible faith and courage of those who had been victims of abuse by priests. Painful as these revelations have been, the victims' courage called the Church to contrition and healing. These encounters have not always been the Church's finest moments. Ongoing revelations from the State of Pennsylvania and the reported immoral behavior of an American cardinal underscore that the work is not complete.

To protect the vulnerable the Catholic Church set in place safe environment guidelines that sought to make any Catholic church, school or institution the safest place imaginable for young people. And this has worked well. Since 2002 there are reported each year fewer instances of children sexually exploited in the care of the Church and her priests, teachers, ministers, employees and volunteers. We are dealing with the brokenness of humanity, but even one instance in the entire country is abominable. I would have liked to suggest that the exposure of the sins of the Church have proven to make children safer across all of society, but I am not at all sure that the evidence would support such a finding. I also would have wished to report that even these rarer instances of abuse within the Church have not ever happened in the diocese of Owensboro. But they have. We continue to strive to respond promptly to any concerns and have acted to remove abusers from any positions of responsibility and authority.

The promise to heal is a promise to continue to invite victims to come forward and allow the Church to provide support, counseling and comfort. This promise is fulfilled first when victims speak about their exploitation and know they will be treated with respect and dignity. The Diocese of Owensboro stands ready to offer assistance to victims to find healing and peace, no matter how long ago that abuse may have taken place.

I invite all people to join me in prayer for anyone wounded and hurting. In our faith we do believe that Jesus Christ is a healer and looks kindly on those who have been harmed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William F. Medley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Most Reverend William F. Medley  
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro

To report suspected abuse call the Kentucky Child Protection Hot Line: 1-877-KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331 (Toll Free) or contact your local Commonwealth Attorney.

To report abuse to the diocese, current or past, by anyone acting in the name of the Church, please call: 270-852-8380 to speak to our Pastoral Assistance Coordinator.