



Diocese of Gallup

Office of the Bishop
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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I write to you today with a deep sense of sadness. I have felt anger, as you have, first regarding the allegations of years of abusive behavior by Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, followed soon after by the devastating report by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury.

We must recognize, in no uncertain terms, that the actions of abusive clerics and the bishops who sheltered them are not merely shameful, but evil. This is the face of sin, allowed to fester for years, and in far too many cases, these acts of evil were committed against children, the most vulnerable and defenseless among us. These survivors, who should have found a place of holiness and refuge within the Church, instead experienced horrific abuse and pain.

And with the recent revelations about Archbishop McCarrick, it appears that many knew of rumors or allegations, and nothing was done. When the American bishops created the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in Dallas in 2002, clear guidelines were given for the handling of abuse allegations against priests and deacons. But there have been no such standards yet given for allegations of abuse or mismanagement by bishops and cardinals.

We still have much work to do, especially we bishops, who are called to act as your shepherds but have, in many cases, allowed the wolves to run rampant among our flocks. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has outlined a new plan to address abuse on all levels of the church. This plan will unite the efforts of laity, experts in law enforcement, psychology, other disciplines and the Vatican, who will undertake a consultation and investigation in three major areas:

1. First, an investigation into the events regarding Archbishop McCarrick. How many vulnerable persons – seminarians and minors – were harmed, and what can be done to prevent abuse from bishops and cardinals in the future?
2. The Charter does not clearly give an avenue for reporting or investigating abuse and misconduct allegations against bishops. Tools for reporting allegations must be made more readily available.
3. Finally, clear procedures will be set in place to resolve complaints against bishops, to make them more prompt, fair and transparent.

Cardinal DiNardo has also outlined three criteria for enacting these goals:

1. Independence – the process of resolving complaints and allegations against bishops must be free from bias and interference by a bishop.
2. Authority – only the Pope has the authority to discipline or remove bishops, and new measures must both respect his authority and protect vulnerable persons from abuse of a bishop's power
3. Involvement of the laity – lay people with expertise in the areas of law enforcement, psychology, investigation, and other relevant disciplines will be involved and given the power to act independently of any one bishop's influence

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I would like to express my support for this plan and the actions outlined within. It will not erase the sins of the past, or take away the horrific experiences of survivors of abuse. But it is, I hope, the start of an effort to strengthen and build upon our policies to prevent abuse and respond more effectively to allegations of abuse in the Church, even allegations against bishops and cardinals.

In the Diocese of Gallup, we hold to rigorous standards of training and reporting of any allegations of abuse. Our Victims Assistance Coordinator, Elizabeth Terrill, is a licensed clinical counselor who will treat all allegations with immediate action while respecting survivors' confidentiality. If you are suffering, or in need of help and resources, please contact her at any time by calling 505-906-7357. **If you have been a victim of abuse, I urge you to call law enforcement immediately. The Diocese of Gallup remains committed to cooperation with law enforcement agencies – up to and including investigation and prosecution of criminal acts and misconduct - and to a culture that fosters a safe environment and protection of children and young people.**

There is no place in the Church for ignoring sin, for caring more for our public reputation than for following Christ faithfully. Any complacency or silence in answer to misconduct must not be tolerated; any celebration of a culture of sexual immorality must end.

This summer marks the 50th anniversary of Blessed Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, which is now more relevant than ever. We – the bishops, clergy, consecrated religious and laity – must strive anew to embrace the standards outlined in *Humanae Vitae*. We must remember the beauty of human sexuality, that the sexual act is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman freely giving of themselves to each other and always open to the gift of life. Every person is called to embrace chastity, according to one's station in life. Actions which deviate from this call to chastity lead to devastation and a culture within the Church and society that is willing to excuse and overlook sin.

I also support any efforts to reform policies in our seminaries to ensure that our future priests will live and study safely in an environment that fosters their vocations and does not tolerate sexual harassment or immoral behavior.

To remind us of our call to holiness, of the call to reject complacency and silence, I would like to ask each priest of the Diocese of Gallup – beginning in September - to offer and dedicate one Mass publicly, once a month, in reparation for the sins of abuse by cardinals, bishops, priests and deacons. I also ask all those who attend to undertake a deep examination of conscience during this time, and I include myself in these efforts. Have we overlooked misconduct? Have we given in to the sin of despair – that, because of the evil actions of some within the Church, we have thought that there is no point in pushing for reform? Have we undertaken an effort to serve God with all our heart, and all our mind, and all our strength? Have we fixed our eyes upon the living Christ, following after Him with every step, and striving for holiness?

Finally, I humbly ask for your prayers. Pray for me and for our priests, that we be relentless in preferring nothing to Christ. Please also especially pray for survivors of abuse – those in our own Diocese, in America, and throughout the world – that they find healing, justice and peace.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James S. Wall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J".

Bishop James S. Wall