



November 6, 2020

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I come to you today as your Shepherd, to share that I have learned the Florida Attorney General has completed the investigation of the seven Dioceses of Florida into the policies, procedures, and practices that have long been in place to protect against abuse and to investigate allegations of misconduct. Over the past two years, we have cooperated fully with this investigation. We thank the Attorney General and her investigators for joining in our mission to keep safe all God's people.

The Diocese of Orlando Safe Environment Policy dictates that when we are informed of an allegation of abuse, we follow Florida law. We have been safe environment training and fingerprinting clergy, religious, lay staff and volunteers since 1997. When a credible allegation of sexual abuse by any Church Personnel is received, the individual is removed from ministry, volunteer activity, or employment. Additionally, the Diocese of Orlando is audited annually by an independent auditor to assure our safe environment practices are followed.

Some of you have expressed that your faith in God is shaken by the sins of church members, particularly clergy. Others have said that your faith in the Church is weakened. I am sorry for all the pain, you the people of God, have experienced.

God is not the sinner. The Church is the beauty and the holiness of the people of God. When we are shaken, we ask God for hope. We ask God to reconcile the conflict between our experience with the Church which has formed our faith and the Church which victims said was responsible for abuse. We ask God to give us wisdom in understanding that this is not about a policy, but about His law which requires us to uphold the dignity of all people. We are called to cherish, defend, and protect those who are most vulnerable, from conception to natural death, and at every moment in their lives.

I ask those who have been harmed to take courage and please come forward because you deserve to be heard. It is our responsibility to safeguard those around us.

Here are some current resources for reporting:
DCF Hotline (for current abuse): 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)
Victim Assistance Coordinator: Randy Means, 407-246-7179

May God bless us this day and always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando