



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

18 August 2018

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write to you today with great sadness to respond to yet another scandal that has shaken the Church. Even though many of the details in the Grand Jury Report in Pennsylvania had already been reported, the full release was still undeniably shocking and its contents devastating to read. We face the undeniable fact that the Church has gone through a dark and shameful time, and while a clear majority of the Report addresses incidents occurring 20+ years in the past, we know that sin has a lasting impact and amends need to be made.

Many children have suffered from cruel behavior for which they bore no responsibility. I offer my apology for any way that the Church, its cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons, or laity have failed to live up to Jesus' call to holiness. I especially offer this apology to the survivors, for the past abuses and for those who knowingly allowed the abuse to occur. I also apologize to the clergy who have been faithful and are deeply discouraged by these reports.

Everyone has the right to experience the natural feelings of grief as they react to this trauma – shock; denial; anger; bargaining; and depression. I want you to know I feel those emotions as well – especially anger. I believe the best way to recover is a return to God's plan for human sexuality. In response to the Archbishop McCarrick revelations, I have written at length about the spiritual battle we are facing. That letter can be found on the archdiocese's home page – archden.org.

I ask everyone to pray for the Church in Pennsylvania, though these dioceses over the last 20 years have greatly evolved from how they are described in the Grand Jury Report, the Church must face its past sins with great patience, responsibility, repentance and conversion.

Creating an environment where children are safe from abuse remains a top priority in the Archdiocese of Denver. In our archdiocese, we require background checks and Safe Environment Training for all priests, deacons, employees, and any volunteers who are around children. During this training, everyone is taught their role as a **mandatory reporter**, and what steps to follow if they witness or even suspect abuse. We also require instruction for children and young people, where they are taught about safe and appropriate boundaries, and to tell a trusted adult if they ever feel uncomfortable. We participate in regular independent audits of our practices, and we have been found in compliance every year since the national audit began in 2003.

Finally, while we have made strides to improve our Archdiocese, I am aware that the wounds of past transgressions remain. We are committed to helping victims of abuse and we are willing to meet with anyone who believes they have been mistreated.

I urge all of us to pray for holiness, for the virtues, and for a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Only he and he alone can heal us, forgive us, and bring us to the Father. Be assured of my prayers for all of you and most especially the victims of any type of sexual abuse committed by anyone.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop Samuel Aquila