



DIOCESE OF PATERSON

Diocesan Center
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Clifton, New Jersey 07013

Office of
THE BISHOP

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August 21, 2018

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Below is my statement on the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report.

The Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report issued on August 14, 2018 was profoundly upsetting to every person of good will. The abuses described in the report are criminal and morally reprehensible. They show a heartbreaking departure from our fundamental belief in the dignity and value of every child.

In the words of our Holy Father Pope Francis, we "acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable. Let us beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others." I personally am heartbroken at the pain so many have experienced because of these incidents, especially that of our children.

As a Church, we are called to provide an environment where our children and all encounter leaders who exemplify God's commandment to love and protect the most vulnerable. The Church today has and continues to learn hard lessons from its past, as we hold accountable abusers and those who permitted these abuses to occur.

The Pennsylvania report details abuses before the early 2000s. This Grand Jury's conclusions are consistent with previous studies showing that the 2002 reforms adopted by the Catholic Church in the United States drastically reduced the incidence of clergy child abuse. The Holy See encourages continued reform and vigilance at all levels of the Catholic Church, to help ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

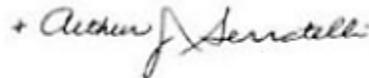
New Jersey's Catholic dioceses have made concrete changes and reforms. Today we have conducted some 380,000 criminal background checks of all diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors. In addition, all Catholic dioceses have integrated a comprehensive program of reporting abuse to civil authorities, compensating and counseling victims, and implementing rigorous protocols and training for more than 2.3 million clergy, employees, volunteers and children. In our diocese, we have reported every single accusation of child abuse to prosecutors since the 2002 memorandum of understanding was put in place by the State of New Jersey with the bishops. We do not investigate ourselves.

We cannot undo the actions of the past, but we continue our efforts to protect our children. We thank law enforcement agencies, child protection advocates and victims themselves who have helped us move beyond compliance to creating the safest environments for learning and worship. We are deeply thankful for those who have joined our efforts to extend both healing and hope to every victim and their family. I, along with the bishops of New Jersey, renew our commitment to protect our young and to foster healing and seek forgiveness.

As your bishop, I understand your pain and your anger. It is real. Our faith is in the Jesus who has chosen to make the Church a sign and instrument of salvation. Even though sin may weaken our trust in the Church, we are called to work with the Church to make dramatic and necessary changes in her leadership and practices so that the Church truly be what Christ intends.

We need your prayers, your challenges, and your ideals. We need your faith. May God give us the grace to do his will and to be his holy people.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "+ Arthur J. Serratelli". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, S.T.D.,
S.S.L., D.D.
Bishop of Paterson

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