



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SPOKANE

Office of the Bishop

March 1, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the past week, I have followed with interest the news about the recent meeting held by Pope Francis in Rome. The meeting, as you might very well be aware, concerned the ongoing sex abuse scandals in the Church. As difficult and heart wrenching this subject may be, it is one that the Church for too long has ignored. Pope Francis compared it to some of the worst horrors in history. I believe that the fruit of this conference will be the implementation of policies and norms for better addressing sexual abuse among the clergy in all countries of the world. The Diocese of Spokane, along with other dioceses of the United States, has followed the policies set by the 2002 Dallas Charter.

The Church in America has grappled with the abuse crisis for decades, most recently regarding the McCarrick scandal. Our experience has shown the need for vigilance in guarding against all sexual sins and crimes.

In his closing address, the Holy Father spoke of the justified anger and betrayal people experienced regarding the issue of sexual abuse. As the spiritual father of the diocese, I know and am moved by the hurt and anger experienced by the faithful. I do not forget or exclude the faithful priests who work under what may seem at times a burden of shame. I ask your prayers for them, as I so often ask them to pray for all of you, that we may be one in bringing the light of Christ into the darkest corners of our world, our Church, and each of our own souls. I commit myself to carry all of you - laity, religious, and clergy alike - in my heart and in my prayers when I attend the next meeting of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. There we will further address the issues discussed in Rome.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the USCCB, said following the Vatican meeting, that we can work to heal the wounds of abuse and cover-up by intensifying the Dallas Charter. Presenters at the meeting spoke about “a code of conduct, the need to establish specific protocols for handling accusations against bishops, user-friendly reporting mechanisms, and the essential role transparency must play in the healing process.” These topics will be part of our next meeting in June.

The virtue of chastity must be embraced and lived by all - both clergy, religious, and laity alike. Sins against chastity harm both family and parish life. Sins against chastity can take many forms: marital infidelity, use of pornography, pre-marital sex, and predatory sexual behavior. Sins against chastity have become pervasive in our society. And all of us, clergy and laity alike, must commit ourselves to living chaste lives.

It is in times of great sin in the world that God raises up holy priests, religious and laity to call the world to faith in Christ. As we enter into the sacred and penitential season of Lent, let us all commit ourselves – with the help of God’s mercy – to the conversion of our own life and the renewal of the Church. Let us together in this season, dedicate ourselves to praying one decade of the Rosary daily asking Our Lord to pour out His graces upon all of us.

In Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas A. Daly
Bishop of Spokane