



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

August, 2019

Dear Friends,

This month marks one year since the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report was released, exposing inappropriate past actions of Church leaders here in the Diocese of Scranton and beyond. I understand that many of you are still shocked, angered and disappointed over the uncomfortable and unsettling issues that were raised. My heart continues to break for those who have suffered abuse and I once again apologize for the sorrow and pain that they and their families have suffered. I apologize as well to all of you for the breach of trust that you have had to endure as a result of the actions and cover up by some members of the clergy in our Church. There is simply no place in a civilized society for the abuse of children - and certainly not within our Church.

Words, however, are never enough. Since August 2018, the Diocese of Scranton has continued to build upon past efforts and taken new steps to keep our children safe and restore your trust in the Church. From publicly releasing a list of credibly accused individuals, to holding listening sessions in many of our parishes, establishing the Independent Survivors Compensation Fund and continuing to mandate background checks and training programs for all clergy, employees and volunteers, we are doing everything in our power to prevent future cases of abuse and provide support for survivors. While you can find additional steps we've taken to keep children safe on our Diocesan website (www.dioceseofscranton.org), that doesn't change the heartbreaking events of the past.

Since I became Bishop in 2010, I have made it a priority to improve how we handle allegations of abuse. The safety and security of children is our primary concern. If allegations of abuse arise, I have acted swiftly, transparently and appropriately.

Yet, we must all work together to help our Church heal and to move forward in a positive way. The mission of bringing the life and love of Jesus into the lives of God's people is a task entrusted to each one of us. The work of healing our Church is no different. As a Church, we must recognize the burden of what has happened and continue to encourage anyone who may be a survivor of abuse to come forward.

Last month, as I gathered with members of our young Church at the annual *Light the Fire Youth Rally*, I shared with them a message I saw on social media which asked young Catholics why they stay in the Church given these troubling times. The question received more than one thousand replies - and not surprisingly -- a majority of the answers were the same. As we continue to confront the difficult realities of the past, so many of you have stayed in our Church because of what we find - good people of faith, whose hearts are filled with the Spirit - the living Word of God - and the sacramental life that culminates in the Eucharist, the very presence of Jesus given to us for our life, salvation and peace. May Jesus' presence in our midst continue to guide our efforts as we move forward.

Thank you and God bless.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton