



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

July 31, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been more than one year since we learned of reports of misconduct involving then-Cardinal McCarrick, quickly followed by the release of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury investigation, which detailed terrible accounts of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. Since that time, I have updated you as I have sought guidance on what our Diocese can do to enhance our efforts to protect minors and emerge as a place of hope and healing. I prayed deeply for guidance from our Lord, sought counsel from many of you in my own flock, and worked to engage in renewed efforts toward protecting children and vulnerable adults in our ministries.

In my last letter to you, I wrote of the Holy Father's *motu proprio*, "*Vos estis lux mundi*", a formal document in which Pope Francis provided new norms for the worldwide response to sexual abuse. While much of what is required in these new norms already has been in place in the Diocese of Manchester for many years, there are several steps I am taking with others locally, regionally, and nationally. For example, since 2003, the Code of Conduct in the Diocese of Manchester has included a mechanism to report concerns involving bishops. Together with my brother bishops from across the country, we met in June and implemented key components of the *motu proprio*, including an agreement to initiate a national third-party reporting system for receiving confidentially, by phone and online, reports of misconduct or abuse by bishops. The bishops of the United States have committed to activating the system no later than May 31, 2020.

Additionally, I wanted to let you know that the Diocese of Manchester has launched a new section on our website designed to provide further transparency to our ongoing commitment to protecting minors. Here we have not only compiled resources for victim-survivors, families, and those who wish to report abuse, but the site also includes a single place to review the names of priests who have been accused of sexual abuse of a minor since 1950. I am publishing names that have already been made public on some level and also including two names more-recently reported and investigated of abuse that occurred more than forty-five years ago. We are now aggregating this information in a readily accessible format at www.catholicnh.org/restoringtrust.

On behalf of my predecessors and the Church in New Hampshire, I am sorry. I seek your forgiveness for the grave sins of abuse and betrayal of trust that representatives of the Church committed. Each and every day, I pray that victim-survivors find healing. I also fervently pray that we never allow such darkness to enter our Church again. With these new efforts, I hope to continue on a path to restoring your trust.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Bishop of Manchester