

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

November 19, 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I am writing to share with you some thoughts and an update, having recently returned from the General Assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore this past week.

My brother bishops and I were both disappointed and frustrated by the decision to delay the vote at the General Assembly on several proposals to address the sexual abuse crisis in the Church here in the United States. We believe that there is an urgent need to take effective and decisive action, but as Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated in his closing statement for the General Assembly, we must do so in communion with the Universal Church, as “moving forward in concert with the Church around the world will make the Church in the United States stronger.”

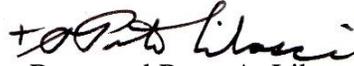
While we were unable to accomplish at this meeting what we expected to be able to do, the meeting was gratifying and hopeful in some ways. There was some disagreement among some bishops about certain aspects of the proposals, but the debate about the proposals was respectful, measured, and insightful, and we worked throughout the several days of the meeting to reach consensus. In addition, my brother bishops and I have recommitted ourselves to holiness and to the convictions of the truth of the Gospel, as we recognize that it is only through holiness that true reform in our Church can be achieved.

Here at home, my staff and advisors have been working on a number of important initiatives. The Diocesan Review Board has made several recommendations, all of which I have decided to adopt. Among those recommendations was that as a temporary measure and until a national third-party reporting system is developed, the Diocese of Manchester create an alternative reporting process by which seminarians and clergy may report allegations of adult misconduct by a member of the clergy or by a bishop. Another recommendation was to retain professional investigators to conduct a full review of all clergy files to ensure the accuracy and integrity of our records. Both of these recommendations are in the process of implementation. In the next few weeks, I will be working with staff to implement the other policy and process measures suggested by the Diocesan Review Board and will be soliciting input from other advisory committees regarding next steps. As these and other steps are implemented, I will communicate with you again.

Every Wednesday other than feast days, I continue to offer for the priests of this diocese the Votive Mass for Priests with the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer and Preface, a practice I had asked of all of our priests so that they might consciously pray for and strengthen each other publicly. And each day, I continue to pray for all of those who have been harmed by clergy and other Church leaders

and for all of the faithful. I humbly ask for your prayers for those who have been harmed, for the clergy of this diocese, for our Church, and for me.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Libasci", with a small cross symbol to the left.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.
Bishop of Manchester

If you or anyone you know has been abused by someone in the Catholic Church, we encourage you to contact law enforcement. For information about how to report abuse, harassment, or exploitation in the Church, to request counseling assistance and other services of the Office for Healing and Pastoral Care, or to learn more about how the Diocese of Manchester works to create a safe environment in all of our ministries, visit www.catholicnh.org/safety.