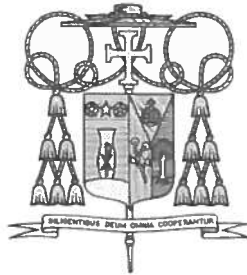


Diocese of Beaumont

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August 30, 2018

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In recent days the Holy Father, and Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), have issued public statements about the sexual abuse of children by some Catholic clergy, and the cover-up of the abuse spanning several generations by some members of the hierarchy. Their statements have been reported in the East Texas Catholic newspaper and are posted, and updated, on the diocesan website (www.dioceseofbmt.org). To the victims, I join with Pope Francis and the Cardinal in apologizing for the severe damage in all aspects of their lives imposed by this sinful and criminal abuse, and the inexcusable cover-up by some bishops of the Church.

Prayer for the victims and their families is continuous. We do need to do more in our outreach to the victims. And, still **more** needs to be done to ensure increased professional pastoral formation, moral and psychological development, oversight and accountability, and frequent involvement of the **laity** with the deacons, priests and bishops who are ordained to accompany us on our journey of faith. Equally, the laity who, as employees or volunteers, are in any form of ministry including teachers, catechetical leaders, counselors, coaches, youth ministers, etc., must receive satisfactorily equivalent preparation and continuing education.

In brief: The diocesan professional process of preparing men for ordination, of hiring laity and using volunteers will become more probing.

Since 2003, we have implemented throughout the Diocese of Beaumont the requirements of the USCCB "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." Our efforts to create a safe environment have been consistent. Adults who work with children and youth have criminal background screenings and participate in "Protecting God's Children" training. Every summer the diocese is audited on our compliance with the Charter, and on each third year there is a more comprehensive on-site audit by trained professionals. Since the initiation of the annual Charter audits, our diocese has received an "in compliance" determination each year.

We have zero tolerance in the Diocese of Beaumont. We **investigate all allegations**, even those that are made anonymously. We contact both police and Child Protective Services. More than 15 years ago, I established a Diocesan Review Board to assist me in carrying out my responsibilities of assessing allegations of sexual abuse. On that board we have lay men and women who are not employees of the diocese and are competent in fields such as psychiatry, judiciary, law enforcement and social service.

We have an effective system in place for reporting and investigating suspected abuse and for removing any offender from ministry.

To know more about our safe environment procedures and practices, please go to our diocesan website (www.dioceseofbmt.org) and click the "Safe Environment" tab at the top. In addition, you can also access "The Bishop" link, and there is more information under the "Safe Environment" tab in the middle of the page.

I applaud Cardinal DiNardo's words in the third paragraph of his most recent document. His words must guide the scrutiny of all who serve the Church: "**The questions raised deserve answers that are conclusive and based on evidence.** Without those answers, innocent men may be tainted by false accusation and the guilty may be left to repeat sins of the past."

In the midst of this suffering of the Body of Christ, all of us, laity, religious and clergy, are urged by our baptismal vows and the command of Jesus to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. Our Lord's words are not merely metaphor. They call us to action. And, God will strengthen us with hope for the future as we continue His mission.

Please remember that each of you are in my prayers. I know our Lord and Savior will grant us wisdom and clarity of thought and discernment if we but humbly ask.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Guillory". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

+ Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.
Bishop of Beaumont