

February, 2019

Your Excellency David Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh
111 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Bishop Zubik,

On the evening of September 20, 2018, a group of 200 committed, hurting and outraged Catholics met for an evening of prayer and listening. Catholics for Change in Our Church (CCOC) was formed that evening. Since then we have been joined by many more. All of us are placed in a crisis of conscience because we are supporting and have supported the hierarchy that can act without our knowledge and input. A follow-up workshop on November 13, "Our Hearts Are Broken: Mending the Breach," resulted in five focus groups created to further discuss a lay response: 1) Survivors; 2) Financial Transparency; 3) Addressing Clericalism; 4) Lay Oversight of Diocesan Functions; and 5) Strengthening and Diversifying the Clergy. These CCOC groups have composed this letter to begin a dialog leading to corrective actions with the ultimate goal of revitalizing the Faith Community through healing and restoring trust through transparency. The Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report on August 14, 2018, made the Church in Pittsburgh ground zero for the global abuse crisis. We, the People of God in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, call the hierarchy to work with us to collaboratively move the church forward and to provide a template of change.

The signers of this letter represent our community and the broader diocesan Church. Like you, we are troubled by the myriad dimensions of the clerical abuse scandals. We acknowledge the positive steps taken by you to this point, including your willingness to have and participate in the four listening sessions. But given the scope and depth of the sins, the only legitimate way forward is for the laity and the clergy, representing the entire Body of Christ, to work together to ensure there is an end to all abuse. And as this goal is pursued, if there are any future allegations of abuse, they should be addressed quickly, openly and compassionately. We believe the following are the most critical issues that deserve our deliberate efforts:

Survivors

- For the Diocese of Pittsburgh to establish a NEW office -- Office of Survivor Advocacy, Family Healing, and Services. This office would be supervised, directed and executed by social services professionals specializing in understanding the needs and challenges and providing systems of support for survivors of sexual abuse. Additionally, this office could provide the following:
 1. Exploring, promoting, and implementing healing models (e.g. *Restorative Justice*);
 2. Providing education materials, including developing and deploying workshops related to Sexual Abuse and Healing;
 3. Guiding Parishes to establish care-giving teams for survivors;
 4. Networking/Interfacing with universities, corporations in building community relations;
 5. Establishing legal protocols and transparencies.
- For the Diocese of Pittsburgh to make an unequivocal statement that the hierarchy, locally, within the US and globally, has broken a sacred covenant with the laity and that the hierarchy requires the laity to participate in restoring the Faith Community.

Financial Transparency

- In 2018, a Financial Transparency Report by Voice of the Faithful, an independent group, gave low scores to the Diocese of Pittsburgh for: 1) failure to have available current, audited financial statements on its website; 2) failure to post information about the Diocesan Financial Council members and their credentials; 3) failure to have proper security procedures in connection with the collection and counting of funds by the parishes in the Diocese. These failures can and should be addressed immediately. Future policies and practice should increase financial transparency.

- The Diocese established a fund for payment of claims based on clergy abuse. Identify all sources of monies used in this fund. The policy for how the funds are allocated, over and above actual awards to claimants, should be made public, and disclose any and all fees for legal counsel, lobbying against changes in statutory legislation, and other expenses.

Addressing Clericalism

- Improve formation of clergy. Work to train clergy for collaboration with the People of God in all our diversity. This would include laity and clergy better engaging with the issue of the psycho-sexual orientation of seminarians and priests to eliminate the current problem of them living “secret lives.”
- Increase lay participation in decision making. It is vital to ensure lay people, men and especially women, have positions of authority in parishes and the Diocese.

Lay Oversight of Diocesan Functions

- Conduct regular evaluations of the Bishop of Pittsburgh and his senior staff by both clerical and lay members of the Diocese.
- Establish clear and effective policies to protect anyone -- including but not limited to, any diocesan employee, parish staffer, priest, seminarian, deacon and members of their families -- from any adverse action by reporting an issue, and most especially, criminal behavior.
- Establish processes for direct lay involvement in diocesan decision-making.

Strengthening and Diversifying the Clergy

- Address the diminishing number of clergy and seek a way forward by encouraging women and men called to serve in the Church. Promote discussions between laity and clergy about women serving in the diaconate and married men serving as priests.
- Include women in highly visible diocesan-wide leadership roles. Increase their voices and their votes in matters of church governance.

These points come from the hearts of good and faithful Catholics. We share a common baptism that compels us to transform the Church into one true Body of Christ. **Bishop Zubik, we request a meeting between you and representatives of our group to review the issues raised here and discuss how we can collaborate in addressing them.** We look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Your sisters and brothers in Christ,

Catholics for Change in Our Church

Cc: His Eminence Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Your Excellency Timothy L. Doherty, Chair of the Bishops' Committee on the Protection for Children and Young People
His Eminence Cardinal Blase Cupich, Member of the Papal Planning Committee for Bishops' Conference to Discuss the Protection of Minors in the Church
His Eminence Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Member of the Papal Council of Cardinal Advisers