

Our Lady of Lourdes Church

8200 Woodman Road

Henrico, Virginia 23228-3200

Office 262-7315 ▪ www.ollrichva.org ▪ Fax 262-7337

To: The Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes

From: Fr. Jim Begley

Date: February 13, 2019

Re: Diocesan Clergy Abuse Update

Last summer, the Church was confronted again with the impact of the clergy child abuse scandal when the Pennsylvania Attorney General's report revealed the scope of abuse and the role of bishops in systematically hiding clergy child abusers. This was followed by the revelations closer to home of credible abuse accusations against Cardinal McCarrick and the involvement of Cardinal Wuerl in a cover-up.

In the fall, Bishop Knestout began a process intended to lead to healing for victims and survivors, transparency in reporting accusations, and a new beginning of mercy and justice for the Diocese of Richmond. He began with a Mass of Atonement at the Cathedral. He spent the next six weeks holding a series of regional listening sessions and Masses of Atonement throughout the Diocese.

At the same time, the Diocese engaged a third party review board to examine the files of all cases where clergy were accused of sexual abuse. The intent was that after a thorough and impartial review, that the names of all those with credible and substantiated accusations of abuse would be made public.

At a meeting of the clergy, principals, and campus ministers, the Diocese shared their plan for releasing the information from the review. The Diocese shared a plan that would enable parishes to be prepared for reaction from the faithful. The first step in this plan was to communicate with staff and leadership councils that the release of this information was coming. We always want to keep our parishioners alerted and informed of matters that affect the parish. The names have now been released. We will have people ready to respond to parishioners who may need assistance. Deacon Jim, Deacon Wayne, Steve Cottam and I will be the primary points of contact. The Diocese has provided us with a number of resources to assist, not the least of which is a dedicated Victims Assistance Office at the Pastoral Center.

The clergy sex abuse scandal is a clear reminder of our human sinfulness. This time in our Church history reminds us of our need to re-focus on the saving power of Jesus Christ. His work continues, and the efforts of the faithful continue to bring the Good News of Christ to the world. We pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will guide us and give us wisdom as we live each day in the service of God.