



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIocese OF LAFAYETTE

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Dear Brothers in Ministry:

The suffering of numerous victims at the hands of our Church's leadership, including my brother bishops, has been disheartening and difficult to bear. The anger and pain you are feeling is rightfully being expressed by many.

I do believe it is good that the truth is being revealed, so that healing may begin for the victims and genuine reform may begin for our Church. Even in these dark times, God's light can be seen clearly manifested in the courage of the victims who come forward and report the injustices done as well as in the righteous anger among the lay faithful and clergy that such grievous sins were committed by shepherds responsible for the wellbeing of God's children.

Our Church family is hurting, and we will endure this pain for some time. As always, our faith in Jesus Christ remains our strength. In light of the broad range of emotions experienced, I do ask your fidelity to charity and fraternity in the midst of this pain. A family in crisis should come together and not apart. I ask you, my brother priests, to not turn against each other or dismiss one another's opinions on these matters. Support groups are encouraged as an opportunity to process the hardships and grow in faith together.

The faithful have many questions and concerns in the face of such scandals, but you may feel at a loss for words in this most difficult time. I am grateful for the feedback many of you have provided to me. In order to assist you with a pastoral response, I would like to provide you with some information based on the inquiries I have received. While I may not be able to address all of your concerns, I will be as transparent as I am able at this time. I am hoping this letter and attached list of *Frequently Asked Questions* and their responses will help. You may freely share these contents.

The Diocese of Lafayette will continue its cooperation and collaboration with civil authorities. Additionally, the Diocese of Lafayette is committed to following the Safe Environment Policy for all clergy, employees, and volunteers who have contact with children in all of our diocesan entities. These policies call for the permanent exclusion from ministry of any cleric found guilty of child sexual abuse, as well as any employee or volunteer.

Let us continue to offer sacrifice and prayers for those impacted by these sinful acts and for the Church. I pray God gives all of us the wisdom and courage to know and do His will. I implore God's favor upon his wounded children through the intercession of Our Sorrowful Mother.

With every good wish and prayers for the Lord's blessing upon your ministry, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette

Enclosure: *Frequently Asked Questions*