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Dear Priests, Sisters, Deacon, and all people of faith,

Probably like you, I have been deeply disturbed and saddened by the recent news about Dioceses in the United States and their historical handling of abuse by clergy. The failure of our Church to protect our children in the past has disheartened us all.

**Our first concern is for the victims and their families. I urge you to join me in prayer for the victims of sexual abuse, and to recommit ourselves to the protection of our children and all vulnerable people.**

In order for you to be able to respond to questions about these situations, here is some information about how we have addressed this in Canada and what has been done in our own Diocese. I direct you to resources about the Canadian response to sexual abuse by clergy at the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops website (please google CCCB). For about ten years now every Catholic Diocese, including ours, have formed a committee to address and investigate allegations of misconduct by clergy and staff. The committee has a protocol and acts independently of myself and office staff. They can be reached through our office, but then the allegation is addressed independently and confidentially by this committee. You can find out more about this committee, our Code of Conduct, and our Victims Support group on our Archdiocesan website.

We have learned some things through this time. First, it is not good for our priests to be too alone or isolated. It is very important that our priests have at least one or two good friends they can relate to and be supported by. Secondly, the lay people need to say something when they notice something wrong. For too long we have had our priests on a pedestal and some have thought it a sin to say something against the priest. These situations in the news painfully remind us that our priests are just as human as any of us and if we notice something wrong we need to mention it to myself or to our allegations committee. We often see the sign, % you see something, say something.+That needs to happen in our Church, too.

It is important that we are well informed and accurate when we are discussing this difficult area. If you could google Dr. Thomas G. Plante's article entitled, %Six Myths about Clergy Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church.+Dr. Plante is an independent researcher who has studied this area and he helps us to deal with the actual facts (This article is from 2004 but his book in 2018 continues to support these findings).

We are all saddened and discouraged by the sinfulness present in JesusqChurch. We pray for humility and courage in facing our sinfulness, asking forgiveness and learning from our sin. May the power of the Cross of Christ help us all His Church.

Archbishop Murray Chatlain  
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