



DIocese of Superior

Office of the Bishop

August 31, 2018

Once again we are all hurt, confused and angered by the recent news of Archbishop McCarrick's abuses, the grand jury report from Pennsylvania, and the accusations against Pope Francis. As we move forward, the way is not totally clear, but I vow with the help of God to do everything in my power to lead our diocese with transparency and integrity in all things. First and foremost, I offer my prayers and support for justice and healing to all victims of clergy abuse. Second, I offer my apologies for Church cover-ups and lack of transparent action, which led to sexual abuse of both children and adults, including seminarians. Third, I strongly encourage any victims of Catholic Church sexual abuse to bravely come forward and report the crimes committed against them. Finally, I ask for prayers of support for the great majority of our holy priests and bishops, who will continue their good and dedicated service to all of us and our Catholic Church.

As a priest and pastor, I have fully supported the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and believe that the Diocese of Superior has taken every step possible to prevent abuse from happening in our diocese since its adoption 16 years ago. I am not aware of any currently serving priests or parish staff in our Diocese that are known or rumored to be abusers. I firmly believe that any of our active or retired priests would come to me if they have any knowledge of abuse. We have been carefully following the safety guidelines of the Charter since 2002. Independent auditors have consistently found our Diocese to be in compliance with all audited articles within the Charter, most recently in July of 2018.

I want you to know that I will be convening a meeting of the Diocesan Abuse Review Board, made up of six lay faithful of the Diocese, two priests and myself, to determine what more we can do to further strengthen our policies, and to review our past responses. I want to ensure that our Church protects not only our children, but everyone from abuse. As your Bishop, I promise, there will be no cover-ups in our Diocese.

Please, if you have been sexually abused, or know of someone who has been sexually abused, by anyone associated with the Catholic Church, I urge you to contact Kathy Drinkwine, our Safe Environment Coordinator, at confidential phone (715) 718-1110, or email kdrinkwine@catholicdos.org, as well as report to law enforcement. I promise that any report will be taken respectfully, seriously investigated, and dealt with promptly and appropriately. Again, as long as I serve as the Bishop of Superior, there will be no cover-ups.

In conclusion, I ask that you join me in daily prayer, praying for the healing of all victims of abuse, and for our Catholic Church throughout the world in these trying times. St. Augustine, patron of our Diocese, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James P. Powers
Bishop of Superior