



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Brooklyn

310 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, New York 11215

September 24, 2018

Dear Faithful of the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens:

It is with profound sadness, but with redoubled resolve, that I write to you concerning the many disturbing news stories that have come out during the last several weeks. First and foremost, as your Bishop, know that I am completely committed to enforcing the zero tolerance policy established in the 2002 Dallas Charter, as well as doing everything in my power to ensure that safe environments exist for all members of the Church, especially our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Stories of past abuses and failures on the part of some in leadership must strengthen our commitment to always strive to do better as we continue the important mission of the Church.

Last week it was announced that the Diocese of Brooklyn, along with the Dorothy Bennett Mercer Center, agreed to settle a case involving four individuals, who were sexually abused by Mr. Angelo Serrano, who is currently serving a prison term for his crimes. Even though Mr. Serrano was a church volunteer, and not a member of the clergy, and even though the abuse occurred in his apartment, and not on church property, priests assigned to the parish failed to recognize signs of the abuse and take appropriate actions. The settlement of \$27 million will be divided by the four victims, each of whom will receive about \$6.8 million, less attorney fees, which is usually about one third. The Diocese's portion of the settlement, \$17.4 million will be completely covered by our insurance policy; however, insurance premiums may have to rise. We are deeply saddened by the abuse they suffered at the hands of Mr. Serrano, and hope that this settlement will assist the victims and their families in the years to come.

In order to assist survivors of sexual abuse by members of the clergy, I initiated an Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP), which is administered by Mr. Kenneth Feinberg, Esq., whose firm has handled several similar programs, including the 9-11 Compensation Program. In addition to a financial compensation, survivors are offered the opportunity for counseling, as well as other forms of support through our Victims Assistance Coordinator. **It is important to note that none of your donations are used to pay for this program. The Diocese sold property and secured a loan, which will be repaid through the leasing of ecclesiastical property. The contributions of the faithful of the diocese are dedicated to the core mission of the Church, and are essential for us to continue our much-needed work.**

Finally, as was recently announced, the Office of the New York State Attorney General issued subpoenas to all the Roman Catholic Dioceses in the state. These subpoenas order the handing over of all documents relating to the sexual abuse of minors by members of the clergy, as well as cases involving non-consenting adults. The Diocese of Brooklyn will certainly comply with this subpoena, which requests documents from January 1, 1950 to the present. You should be aware of the fact that since 2002 we have been sharing our files and allegations against clergy with the District Attorneys of Brooklyn and Queens. In addition, in 2004 I established an independent toll-free number, **1-888-634-4499**, so that anyone with an allegation against a member of the clergy can make a report, which is also shared with the corresponding District Attorney. If the allegation is within the statute of limitations, it is also shared with the Special Victims Bureau of the NYPD, for their immediate intervention. The Diocese of Brooklyn is committed to protecting our most vulnerable members as well as the pursuit of justice.

With assurances of your remembrance in my prayers, especially at the celebration of the Eucharist, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D, D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn