



Catholic Diocese of Victoria
Office of the Bishop

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August 21, 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Over the course of the past few weeks, many serious accounts of sexual abuse by clergy of the Catholic Church have been revealed. I am deeply saddened and angered by these accounts of profound evil. The suffering endured by the victims of sexual abuse and their families is most painful, and is further compounded by the betrayal experienced by victims and their families from bishops, priests, and leaders of faith communities.

The failure of Church authorities to address and prevent the abuse by covering up such crimes and by simply moving perpetrators is a grave wrong and a breach of trust, demonstrating a total disregard for the pain and suffering of the victims and the church communities. If you are aware of any situation of sexual abuse, please report it immediately to law enforcement authorities at 1-800-663-9122. The Diocese of Victoria is deeply committed to the protection of minors and vulnerable persons, and any concerns should be reported to the Diocesan Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment Coordinator, Greg Beattie, at 877-237-7233 or via email at gbeattie@rcdvictoria.org.


The Diocese of Victoria has for several years mandated Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment policies, protocols, screening, a reporting process, and training, details of which may be accessed via the Diocesan website at www.rcdvictoria.org. We continue to work to improve training and screening protocols for all clergy, employees, and volunteers in our Diocese to ensure that all may know they are safe and free from harm in our communities.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, issued a pastoral letter to the People of God, wherein he stated: *"It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God's People"* (August 20, 2018).¹

The pain and suffering of one victim is too much, as it affects the whole Body of Christ, and calls us to act ever more transparently and humbly before our God, and one another. I invite you to join me in prayer, penance, and fasting in solidarity, on Saturday, September 15, 2018, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, as we implore the grace of God for the healing of victims of sexual abuse and for all those who have suffered abuse by the leadership in the Church.

During this sad time, we are called to walk humbly and faithfully, trusting in the grace of Christ and the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit at work within the Church. I pray that the Good News of God's infinite love and mercy may be proclaimed to all creation, unhindered by sin and evil, and that the Light of Christ may overcome the darkness and shadows of our lives.

In Communion,

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Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria

Encl. (2): Pope Francis: Letter to the People of God, August 20, 2018
Statement by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, August 20, 2018

¹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180820_lettera-popolo-didio.html