



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On Monday, I will release the names of priests who have been credibly accused of the sexual abuse of minors. The first of the alleged sexual abuse incidences occurred in 1948; the last in 1995. The list, along with the process used by the independent Review Board to determine whether an allegation is considered credible, will be posted at 3:00 p.m. on www.scdiocese.org.

Hopefully releasing this list marks a new chapter for the Diocese of Sioux City, in which I commit to a future of trust, openness and accountability. We will build this future by first acknowledging our painful past, a past when trust was betrayed, children were abused, and information was withheld.

I am heartbroken and angry that some of our most vulnerable were victimized by priests, who were in positions of authority. I am angry some of my brother clergy committed unspeakable crimes, and yet, due to Church practices, were never held fully accountable. I am tremendously saddened these actions have led children and others to question Christ's love and their Catholic faith.

On behalf of the Church, I am profoundly sorry and apologize to each victim. I am grateful for the courage each victim has demonstrated by coming forward and am committed to helping each of them heal.

An important step in this healing is the release of the names of the priests with credible allegations. My goal in sharing the list is to let victims and families know we believe them and care for them. I hope it alleviates the pain and anger that some of you, the faithful of the diocese, feel. I also hope it helps those not of our faith to know that the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Sioux City is facing our past and doing all we can to protect children and help victims.

Please keep in mind these are *accusations* against the priests. Even though they are considered credible, they are not the equivalent of a conviction in a court of law. At this point, we are reporting the information we have, and other accusations may emerge. If you, or someone you know, is a victim of sexual abuse by clergy, please contact our Victims Assistance Coordinator at 1-866-435-4397 as well as civil authorities.

Therefore, what should a believing community do when such terrible accusations are made against their clergy regarding crimes against innocent children, who are so beloved by Jesus?

First, we do all we can to help and support the victims. Then we provide help and support to our fellow Catholics who are hurting because of the abuse. They include those who are angry, like me, as well as some believers who have seriously considered leaving, or have actually left, the Church.

Finally, we do what we always do – pray to a loving Father to strengthen and bless all his children.

I invite you to join me on Thursday, February 28th at 6:00 p.m. as we celebrate a Mass of Renewal at the Cathedral. If time or distance is a challenge and you cannot attend, please check with your parish about their plans.

Your brother in Christ,

Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Bishop of Sioux City

DIocese of Sioux City

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