



THE CHURCH *Healing*

A Pastoral Letter to the Church of Pittsburgh
Following the Listening Sessions

Most Reverent David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

*“The Lord heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.”*

Psalm 147:3

(1) *The Church Healing*. While there are many ways that Jesus showed Himself as Savior during the three years of His public ministry, none defines Jesus more poignantly than His mission as healer: the healer who was nailed to the tree of Calvary on Good Friday and is raised from the tomb on Easter morning.

(2) In the Bible there are two accounts that speak of Jesus crying. One of those scenes is Jesus crying at the death of His friend Lazarus. He wept over the loss of one person whom He loved. Another scene - - most haunting -- is Jesus crying over Jerusalem. He wept because of the painful wounds that existed in and throughout that community. In the days before his crucifixion, Jesus sought to bring healing, not only to individuals, but to places.

(3) Over the course of the last six months, I have engaged in a number of listening sessions: the four general listening sessions in each of the vicariates, and meetings with individuals and small groups. So, what did I hear?

- I heard the profound pain of victims/survivors who had suffered in many different ways in body, mind, and spirit.
- I heard the spiritual anguish of those struggling to hold onto their faith.
- I heard the desire of those seeking to keep their children in the Church.
- I heard parents' concerns about the safety of their children today.
- I heard the need for greater transparency.
- I heard the laity calling for a profound shift in how the institutional church functions.
- I heard demands for change.
- I heard about priests who have been faithful and effective ministers of Christ's mercy and love.
- I heard concerns about whether some clergy are involved in sexual relationships, either heterosexual or homosexual.
- I heard from laity, including victims/survivors of clergy sexual abuse, who long to work together in service to Jesus's mission for the Church.
- I heard calls for changes in me as your Bishop.
- I heard some call for me to submit my resignation as Bishop.
- I heard others who encouraged me to continue to lead with a pastoral heart.

(4) So many wounds came to light, some very deep wounds of abuse that date back to many years ago. Others are fresh wounds from the news of horrific acts of abuse. Our wounds are still open. It is impossible to undo the heinous actions committed in the past. So we must turn to God and, with His divine love and guidance, do everything possible to foster healing and to restore trust.

(5) As Jesus cried for Lazarus and over Jerusalem, I too have cried over the ways that people have been deeply wounded by some members of the Church who should have modeled His words and deeds of love and mercy. While the Holy Father has recently convened a meeting to address the issue of clergy sexual abuse, this pastoral letter, *The Church Healing*, is a response to the voices of the people in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. It is an important step in a necessary direction, demonstrating how the Church of Pittsburgh will continue our outreach to all of our people. As one participant in the first listening session

said, “We are all wounded but we know that out of woundedness, tremendous possibilities for new growth can also come; that is all of our responsibility, the faithful, the clergy, everyone.” And as another victim/survivor said in the third listening session: “After I was wounded, I was lost and abandoned. I felt abandoned by God... I have been working hard to try to forgive and love... I think I’d like to be part of the healing and reconstruction to make it a Church to be proud of.”

(6) The wounds in the Church of Pittsburgh need healing. The wounds in the Church of Pittsburgh need the healing of our Lord. Through Christ, the Divine Physician, with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, in the love that is God the Father: may the Church of Pittsburgh be *The Church Healing*.

(7) The victims/survivors of clergy sexual abuse carry the deepest wounds in the Church of Pittsburgh. Their families and loved ones have shared in their suffering while also reeling from the fury and grief that result from abuse. In the words of a victim/survivor, “It was a crime to my whole humanity, my whole being - to my soul. This man was the face and the hands and the voice of God. As a Catholic child you are taught to never say anything bad about God - it’s a sin. Priests hold the power from God, and he held power over me.”

(8) Yet, the ravages of abuse do not end there. Saint Paul, in describing the Church as the Body of Christ, explains that, “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26). Every member of the Church has been wounded in some way, as we have come to understand the extent to which the innocence of children was destroyed and trust shattered by abuse at the hands of clergy.

(9) In addition, as Pope Francis has reminded us, the abuse of power damaged trust in the Church and in Church leadership. For my part, through the listening sessions and in my own experience, I am aware of the painful fractures in the relationships between all of us: between laity and bishops, priests and laity, priests and priests and between priests and bishops.

(10) Because of this, some have decided to leave the Church. Others have chosen to remain, but are struggling with a loss of confidence in Church structures. All of us have felt the impact. With wounds that are deep and brokenness that is broad, we must turn to God.

(11) The psalmist pleads: “Lord, send out your light and your truth; let these be my guide” (Ps. 43:3). Light and truth: these along with the grace of God must be our guide as we travel the path to healing and to restoring trust. There can be no healing, no reconciliation, without the truth. The truth is not merely a practice that the Church needs to follow. Truth is one of the names Jesus gives Himself: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). In the name of Truth, I commit the Diocese of Pittsburgh to serve with greater transparency. As one victim/survivor stated: “What would Jesus do? He would tell us to heal and to comfort the victims. He would tell us to be transparent.”

(12) “Let there be *light*” (Gen. 1:3). These are the first words spoken by God in sacred scripture. Light is what God created *first*. Light is necessary for life and for truth. Child sexual abuse exists in the darkness of lies. It takes great courage for individuals to come forward about sexual abuse, whether inflicted by clergy or anyone else. Survivors who have called the Church to account deserve our admiration and appreciation. They have suffered reprehensible violations of their human dignity. Some have been on this difficult journey for many years. The healing of individuals and of institutions is only possible in the light of truth.

(13) The summit on “The Protection of Minors in the Church,” recently convened by Pope Francis, addressed many of these same issues. The desire to protect children and vulnerable persons, to be in solidarity with victims/survivors, as well as the commitment to greater transparency and accountability,

are universal. Some actions are to be carried out on the local level, such as the actions proposed in this pastoral letter. Other actions or changes can only be addressed at the level of the universal Church, such as changes to canon law or ordination.

(14) The Church is at a watershed moment. This is a time for concrete action that will continue to foster healing and rebuild relationships between all of us. After listening and praying, in consultation with lay leaders and clergy, I have developed a five-point action plan. Some steps continue and strengthen long-standing practices.



In addition, some new initiatives are already underway and other steps are to be implemented in the coming weeks and months. Victims/survivors and their loved ones have been instrumental in helping me to define these steps. Victims/survivors will continue to shape our diocesan response to assist those who have been abused, to strengthen our efforts to prevent future abuse by any representative of the Church, and to restore whatever is broken in the Body of Christ.

(15) Through these initial five actions, I pray that Jesus will illuminate our path with His Light and His Truth so that the Church of Pittsburgh may become what we must be -- a Church that is healing.

BISHOP ZUBIK'S FIVE POINT ACTION PLAN

- 1. Healing and Enhanced Support for Victims/Survivors, Their Families and Loved Ones**
- 2. Greater Financial Transparency**
- 3. Increased Accountability**
- 4. Ongoing Spiritual and Human Formation for Clergy and Seminarians**
- 5. Continued Listening to Seek Truth and Reconciliation**

Bishop Zubik's Five-Point Action Plan to Respond to Abuse in the Church

The Church is at a watershed moment. This is a time for concrete action that will continue to foster healing and rebuild relationships between all of us. After listening and praying, in consultation with lay leaders and clergy, I have developed a five-point action plan. Through these initial five actions, I pray that Jesus will illuminate our path with His Light and His Truth so that the Church of Pittsburgh may become what we must be -- a Church that is healing.

1 Healing and Enhanced Support for Victims/Survivors, Their Families and Loved Ones

- Establishment of the Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults which incorporates previously existing offices and new functions to support the protection of children and healing for victims/survivors.
- Compensation for victims/survivors through the Independent Reconciliation & Compensation Program.
- Expand the role of the Independent Review Board.
- Support groups led by trained facilitators to provide confidential emotional support.
- Spiritual retreats to foster spiritual healing.

2 Greater Financial Transparency

- Make the audited diocesan financial report easy to access online and provide a broader scope of information.
- Provide the aggregate amount of past victims' compensation through legal settlements from 1991 to the present, without identifying the recipients.
- Publish the total amount disbursed by the *Independent Reconciliation & Compensation Program*, without identifying the recipients.
- Publish the legal fees incurred by the diocese related to clergy sexual abuse.
- Publish the annual amount that the diocese is canonically obligated to pay as sustenance to clergy who have been removed from ministry due to substantiated allegations.
- Expand the membership of the Diocesan Finance Council to include representatives from all six counties of the diocese.

3 Increased Accountability

- Establish the Church Healing Commission, an advisory commission to monitor and assess the progress of this five-point plan.
- Establish an independent, third-party system for reporting misconduct.
- Continue to update the list of clergy with allegations of child sexual abuse.

4 Ongoing Spiritual and Human Formation for Clergy and Seminarians

- Seek additional opportunities to address psychosexual development, the formation of authentic, trusting relationships and support for living a healthy, chaste, celibate life in our seminary and diaconate formation programs.
- Support for clergy in their responsibility of living a healthy, chaste celibate life.

5 Continued Listening to Seek Truth and Reconciliation

- Continued listening sessions will be held to address this issue and other matters of concern to the faithful.

ACTION 1 Healing and Enhanced Support for Victims/Survivors, Their Families and Loved Ones

(16) The listening sessions made it clear that the emotional and spiritual healing of sexual abuse inflicted by clergy and other representatives of the Church must continue to be a top priority of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The pain and anguish of victims/survivors, the accounts of their abuse and of how the Church responded, have affected us all. Our efforts to relieve their suffering demand the dedication of our time, attention, and resources in the forms of both prayer and action. The Diocese of Pittsburgh is committed to providing ongoing pastoral and therapeutic support for victims/survivors of sexual abuse. The following are actions that the Diocese of Pittsburgh is taking to foster the healing of victims/survivors and their loved ones.

A. (17) The Establishment of the Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

In August 2018, the Diocese of Pittsburgh retained a nationally recognized child welfare advocate, with extensive experience as a state prosecutor and federal official specializing in crimes against children. He has been analyzing our policies and practices related to child protection and has begun to make recommendations for improvement. In response to his initial recommendations, effective April 1, 2019, I am establishing a Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults that will streamline and strengthen our longstanding work in these areas. A secretariat is the highest division of diocesan governance, which will further ensure that efforts to help victims/survivors and prevent further abuse,

receive top priority. It will provide direct ministry to victims/survivors and also oversee efforts to prevent anyone else from becoming a victim. The diocesan response to victims/survivors must continue to be one of compassion and informed action. Compassion and action must transcend office structure. But changes to our organization can lay the foundation to make our response as compassionate, informed, and effective as possible. The Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will include four offices:

1. The Office for Victims' Assistance

(18) First established in 1993, this office is and will continue to be staffed by a professional skilled in the psychological sciences. This is where the victims/survivors' voices are first heard, where the Church's first response is to invite them to speak about their abuse. The office is responsible for coordinating our response and outreach to victims/survivors. In addition, this office provides the staffing for the diocesan hotline that receives calls regarding allegations of sexual abuse of a minor.

2. The Office for Accompaniment:

(19) In response to victims/survivors who have felt isolated from the community of the Church, this new office will invite victims/survivors to benefit from support groups and spiritual resources on the parish or local level. It will also work with clergy, staff and lay leaders, including parish pastoral councils, to create a welcoming environment for victims/survivors. That effort will include raising awareness in each parish about sexual abuse and the local need to support the healing of victims/survivors. The Office for Accompaniment will begin its services no later than July 1, 2019.

3. The Office for Compliance

(20) Known since 2007 as the Office for the Protection of Children and Young People, its staff is responsible for ensuring that background checks and child protection training for all clergy (bishops, priests and deacons), as well as for all lay staff and volunteers, are complete and up to date. These requirements include background checks by the Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the FBI. In addition, this office supervises certification in mandated reporter training and "Protecting God's Children" training. In the diocese, 75,880 persons have undergone background checks and have been trained in child protection by this office. Of that number, those currently serving as clergy, staff and volunteers are reflected in the attached chart.

Number of Current Persons with Background Checks and Child Protection Training

The Diocese of Pittsburgh began to require and track background checks by the Pennsylvania State Police and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, as well as "Protecting God's Children" training, by 2007. Mandated reporter training and FBI background checks were added by state law in 2015. The diocese requires the background checks of all clergy, employees and virtually all volunteers. Pennsylvania law requires mandated reporter training only of clergy and employees who have direct contact with minors. The Diocese of Pittsburgh goes beyond state law in requiring mandated reporter training of many volunteers, and has had more people trained and certified as mandated reporters than any other organization in Pennsylvania. The statistics listed here are the number of current clergy, employees and volunteers who have undergone the training and background checks that are required in light of their roles and responsibilities in the Church.

37,920	39,007	8,998	38,328	17,958
PA Child Abuse History Certification	State Police Criminal Record Certification	FBI Fingerprint Certification	Protecting God's Children Training	Mandated Reporter Training

It will also be responsible to ensure that children and young people continue to be trained to recognize the signs of abuse and how to report it. Furthermore, it will be the responsibility of the Director of the Office for Compliance to work with Safe Environment Coordinators in parishes, schools and diocesan institutions to oversee compliance with diocesan safe environment policies. This office will take on its new title on April 1, 2019.

4. The Office for Investigations and Monitoring

(21) This new office, to be staffed by a law enforcement professional, will be responsible for conducting any diocesan inquiry into allegations that would not be the purview of law enforcement investigation. In addition, the officer will monitor clergy who were removed from ministry with substantiated allegations, but who were not dismissed from the clerical state due to age, illness, or canonical restriction, as determined by the Holy See. This monitoring will take place through quarterly contact with such clergy. Information from both investigations and monitoring must be reported in writing to the Secretary of the Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. This office will begin operations no later than September 1, 2019.

- B. (22) Compensation for victims/survivors** of clergy sexual abuse, through the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program. This compensation program began on January 22, 2019, and will continue until September 30, 2019. It is designed to help victims/survivors in an atmosphere where their interests are secure and respected. The administrators of the program, who are fully independent from the diocese, have full autonomy to determine the amount of any compensation for eligible claims. To learn more about the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program visit www.diopitt.org/ircp.

C. (23) Expanding the Role of the Independent Review Board.

The Independent Review Board, established in 1989, is composed of individuals from various disciplines pertinent to assessing allegations of child sexual abuse, such as psychologists, parents of victims, prosecutors and pastors. This board hears from victims/survivors, witnesses and the accused clergy member, in order to provide an independent recommendation to the bishop regarding a cleric's suitability for ministry in light of the allegation. The Independent Review Board does not replace the civil legal system, which determines guilt and punishment for crimes committed against the state. All allegations of civil crimes are immediately referred to the appropriate district attorney for investigation and prosecution.

(24) The board's role is now threefold: 1) to assess allegations of child sexual abuse and advise the Bishop on the suitability of the accused for ministry; 2) to regularly review all diocesan policies related to sexual abuse of minors; 3) beginning July 1, 2019, the Independent Review Board will meet quarterly to receive an update on all issues related to any allegation of sexual abuse or any inappropriate sexual behavior received within the previous three months. The Secretary for the Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will provide staff for the Independent Review Board.

- D. (25) Support groups**, led by trained facilitators and other victims/survivors to provide confidential emotional support and compassion. As one victim/survivor stated, "A dedicated support group would be a gift to us. Please make this happen so that others will not be alone." These groups are already being formed. Those who would like to participate are asked to contact the Victims' Assistance Coordinator at assistance@diopitt.org.

E. (26) **Spiritual retreats**, such as "Grief to Grace," to foster spiritual healing. "Grief to Grace" is a week-long retreat centered on Jesus Christ that employs a comprehensive understanding of medical and psychological principles to foster healing from sexual, physical, emotional, and/or spiritual abuse. "Grief to Grace" will be offered in the Diocese of Pittsburgh within the next 18 months. Additional information on "Grief to Grace" and upcoming retreats outside of the diocese can be found on their website www.griegtograce.org.

ACTION 2 **Greater Financial Transparency**

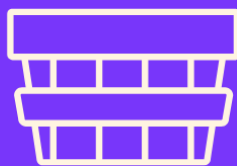
(27) In the listening sessions and in other conversations, many people expressed a desire to better know the disposition of diocesan finances. The Church is supported financially solely through the free-will offerings of the faithful, whether through collections, donations or bequests.

(28) As background, oversight of diocesan finances occurs in several ways. The Diocesan Finance Council consists of lay business and finance professionals. It meets with me on a regular basis and reviews diocesan financials, provides advice, promotes best practices and is canonically required to give consent for certain large expenditures. *The Code of Canon Law* also requires that the College of Consultors, a group of priests selected from the Priest Council who are elected by the priests of the diocese, provides approval of certain large financial transactions at both the diocesan and parish levels. Finally, an independent audit of diocesan financials is conducted annually. Since 1969, the diocese has annually published its operational financial statement in *The Pittsburgh Catholic*

HOW YOUR GIVING WORKS

The Church is supported financially solely through the free-will offerings of the faithful, whether through collections, donations or bequests.

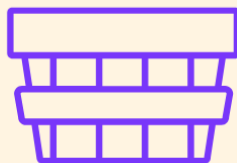
WEEKLY OFFERTORY



Monies received in the weekly offertory collection are used for operational costs of the parish, including ministries, staff salaries and benefits, utilities, insurance and other expenses.

Second and special collections are used for the stated intentions or recipients of each collection.

PARISH SHARE PROGRAM



The Parish Share Program is an annual collection that provides financial resources for diocesan ministries and operations.

DONATIONS & BEQUESTS

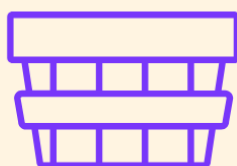


Donations and bequests can either be restricted or unrestricted.

Restricted donations can only be used for the purposes defined by the donor.

Unrestricted donations can be used at the discretion of the recipient (diocese, parish, etc.).

OUR CAMPAIGN FOR THE CHURCH ALIVE!



Our Campaign for The Church Alive! was an extraordinary campaign to raise funds that are restricted for the uses that were determined in advance in case statements and cannot be used for any other purpose.

and more recently has posted it on the diocesan website. At the parish level, canon law requires each parish to have a lay finance council whose role is to advise the pastor on financial matters. Each parish is also required to publish and make available to all parishioners its financial statements annually. Additionally, each parish is audited periodically by internal diocesan auditors for compliance with diocesan financial policies, in order to ensure that proper financial controls are in place. The audit results and recommendations are presented to the pastor and parish finance council. These practices will continue. After the pastor and finance council have received the report, a summary is to be shared with the faithful of the parish.

(29) In addition, the following are actions the Diocese of Pittsburgh is taking to enhance financial transparency:

- A. (30) While our audited financial report is currently posted online, we commit to making the information easier to find and, at the same time, to providing a broader scope of information.
- B. (31) Expand the current membership of the Diocesan Finance Council to include representatives from every county of the diocese. This expansion will be completed by July 1, 2019.
- C. (32) By July 1, 2019 we will provide the aggregate amount of past victims' compensation through legal settlements from 1991 to the present, without identifying the recipients. The earliest record that we have of such a settlement is from 1991. No funds for victims' compensation have come from *Our Campaign for the Church Alive!*, Catholic Charities, or any other funds designated for a specific use by the donor.
- D. (33) By January 1, 2020, we will publish the total amount disbursed from the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP), without identifying the recipients. This program began in late January 2019 and continues through September 2019. No funds for the IRCP will come from *Our Campaign for the Church Alive!*, Catholic Charities, the Parish Share Program, parish collections, schools or any other funds designated for specific use by the donor.
- E. (34) No later than July 1, 2019, we will publish the amount of the legal fees incurred by the Diocese of Pittsburgh related to clergy sexual abuse.
- F. (35) No later than July 1, 2019, we will publish the annual amount that the diocese is canonically obligated to pay as sustenance to clergy who have been removed from ministry due to a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse but who cannot be dismissed from the clerical state.

God can and does heal us.

God can and does restore us.

*Through the grace of God, listening is an opportunity for
the Church of Pittsburgh to grow in humility and holiness.*

-Bishop David A. Zubik

ACTION 3

Increased Accountability

(36) In the listening sessions and in other conversations, I heard calls for greater accountability and additional oversight. As a participant in the third listening session said, “Bishops must be accountable to the flocks they serve.” The following are actions that the Diocese of Pittsburgh is taking to increase accountability and oversight:

A. Establish the Church Healing Commission

(37) To assist me in monitoring progress on the five-point plan in this letter, I am creating the Church Healing Commission. The purpose of this advisory commission is to help me ensure that the promises made in this pastoral letter are being implemented. The commission will also recommend additional actions to foster healing and to restore trust. It will consist of up to 12 laypeople who are Catholic and non-Catholic, including abuse victims/survivors, with representation from all six counties in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The convener of this commission will be the Secretary for the Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. Members will come from a variety of pertinent backgrounds, including law enforcement, the legal profession, health care and parish ministries. It is my intention to appoint members to this commission so that they can begin their work no later than July 1, 2019.

B. Establish an Independent, Third-Party System for Reporting Misconduct

(38) In the first listening session a participant stated, “I think all of us need to be whistle blowers, and not just to the issue of sexual predators but in a wider manner.” It is imperative that all be held to the same high standards of moral and professional behavior, as spelled out in the diocesan *Code of Pastoral Conduct*, without regard to rank or title. This includes bishops, priests, deacons, and any lay employee of the diocese, its parishes and schools. Anyone must be able to report misconduct without fear of reprisal. I believe that providing access to an independent third-party reporting system is an essential step in our efforts to achieve full accountability. Employees, volunteers, parishioners, vendors, and other interested parties will be able to report concerns about suspected financial, professional, or personal misconduct in any parish, school, institution or office of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. I am asking the Secretary of the Secretariat for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults to identify independent providers of third-party reporting systems. Those recommendations will be shared with the members of the Church Healing Commission for their advice. It is my intention that this system be operative no later than September 1, 2019.

(39) The diocese continues to encourage anyone who has been the object of sexual abuse by a member of the clergy, or by any employee or volunteer of the Church, to contact law enforcement without delay. Anyone who suspects abuse of a current minor is urged to call PA ChildLine at 800-932-0313. PA ChildLine is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911. All those who work or volunteer in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, whether in parishes, schools or other ministries, are required to report suspected child sexual abuse. In addition, we also continue to encourage victims/survivors of abuse, no matter when the abuse occurred, to contact the Diocesan Abuse Hotline at 1-888-808-1235.

C. Continued Update of the Public List of Clergy with Abuse Allegations

(40) The Diocese of Pittsburgh has no priest or deacon in active ministry against whom a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse has been made. In August 2018, the Diocese of

Pittsburgh posted on our website a list of diocesan clergy against whom an allegation of child sexual abuse was made. The list is divided into five categories:

1. Those who are living and have been permanently removed from ministry due to a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse.
2. Those who were removed from ministry due to a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse and are now deceased.
3. Those who were already deceased when an allegation was made against them.
4. Those with allegations that were not substantiated as child sexual abuse, but whose names appear in the Grand Jury Report.
5. Living clergy who have been removed from ministry, pending a civil or canonical process to determine if the allegation against them is substantiated.

I pledge that this list will continue to be updated in its posting on the diocesan website.

ACTION 4

Ongoing Spiritual and Human Formation for Clergy and Seminarians

(41) The vast majority of the faithful of the Diocese of Pittsburgh join with me in recognizing the overall dedication and devotion of the priests who currently serve the Church of Pittsburgh.

(42) Our priests, deacons, and laity are shattered after reading the Grand Jury Report's description of horrific acts of abuse committed by men who were ordained to reflect the heart of Jesus to others. No matter how long ago the abuse occurred, these immoral and illegal acts have caused some to cast a wide net, viewing all or most Catholic clergy as child molesters.

(43) Our clergy, like you and me, have been affected uniquely by the scandal of abuse. While this letter is written to all of the faithful of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and beyond, I want to take a moment to address our priests, who face particular challenges in light of the current situation in the Church.

(44) My Brothers, in your sacramental and pastoral care of the faithful, you have heard the cries of anguish of those abused by clergy and of their loved ones. You have heard the anger of the faithful regarding not only the sin of clergy sexual abuse but also about how the Church responded. You have borne insults and have been the recipients of false accusations simply because of your priestly attire.

I am aware that you are being called to serve in extremely challenging times when the very institution of the priesthood is looked upon as suspect; when you are being blamed for the sins of others. In a very personal way, this experience unites us more closely to Jesus. It is an opportunity for us to strive for greater holiness.

I want you to know that I not only support you in the challenges you face, but I am truly inspired by you. You serve the Church with integrity. I admire you. I pray for you. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

(45) And to you, all the members of the Church of Pittsburgh, I can and do promise that every possible step is being taken to provide current and future clergy with the support they need to live a healthy, chaste life, with a heart free to love as Jesus loves, by laying down their lives for others.

(46) During the listening sessions, in addition to issues of child sexual abuse, people raised concerns about the fidelity of clergy to their sacred ordination promise of celibacy. This includes the imperative practice of chastity and the related obligation not to engage in adult sexual relationships of either a heterosexual or homosexual nature. Questions were also voiced about diocesan practices to foster the spiritual and human formation of seminarians, deacons, priests and bishops, specifically regarding sexuality, as well as emotional maturity, relational skills, and overall psychological well-being.

(47) Many steps have been and are being taken to address these concerns. They begin before applicants can start any formation to become priests or deacons. Since 1968, every man applying to enter the seminary has been required to undergo a psychological evaluation, which includes screenings for their psychosexual development. Over the years, these evaluations have radically improved, in accord with advances in psychology. Since the 1990s, our seminarians have undergone these evaluations twice: once when they apply to enter the college seminary and again when they are preparing to advance to the second stage of their formation in a graduate school of theology. Currently, these evaluations are conducted by a national expert in the psychological development of clergy. As a result of these evaluations, each year we turn away some applicants due to concerns about their psychosexual development. A similar psychological screening process takes place with the men applying to the formation program for permanent deacons.

(48) We will continue to evaluate our seminary and diaconate formation programs, seeking additional opportunities to address psychosexual development, the formation of authentic, trusting relationships and support for living a healthy, chaste, celibate life. Grace builds on nature, so a stronger foundation of personal development will assist our clergy on the path of holiness.

(49) Our support for our clergy cannot end there, however. An individual's personal development does not cease when they are ordained a deacon, priest or bishop. Through fervent prayer and ongoing spiritual direction, the hearts and souls of the clergy can continue to grow with a pure and selfless love that seeks not to be served, but to serve. This is witnessed not only in the many facets of their ministry, but in the quality of all of their interpersonal relationships. If a member of the clergy is facing a personal struggle, psychological counseling is always available and encouraged. I can assure you that our diocesan Vicar for Clergy is working with me on the continual renewal of our clergy by providing opportunities for their ongoing spiritual and personal development.

(50) I invite all who are reading this letter to pray that the hearts of all clergy will be overflowing with the selfless love of Jesus, the Good Shepherd who guides and protects his flock. We need our clergy to be holy, healthy and happy men of prayer and good works. Encourage all clergy in their calling to serve Jesus.

*This letter is not and cannot be
the final word about The Church Healing.
It is yet another step,
with many behind us and many more before us.*

-Bishop David A. Zubik

ACTION 5

Continued Listening to Seek Truth and Reconciliation

(51) At the listening session at Saint Paul Cathedral, I realized that it was the first time I had gone to the cathedral as Bishop to listen, rather than to speak. At all of the listening sessions, I was determined to do precisely that – to listen. This letter has been an attempt to respond to what I have heard, but I still need to listen!

(52) I will continue to listen to individual victims/survivors: to their accounts of abuse, to their feelings of abandonment, to their anger and frustration, to their desire for healing, and to their ideas about how the Church can move forward.

(53) I will continue to hold public listening sessions, not just regarding clergy sexual abuse, but on other matters of concern to our faithful. I commit myself to conducting listening sessions in each of the four vicariates every spring and every fall. God is always ready to listen to us. Every leader who is ordained to serve Jesus Christ, and to follow in His footsteps, must listen, too. These encounters will provide opportunities to hear the Word of God, to reflect, and to pray about how God is inviting us to draw closer to Him and to one another. The next round of listening sessions will commence in the Fall 2019.

(54) The Church is the Body of Christ. The Church does not belong to the bishops, or to the priests, or to the deacons, or to the laity; but to Jesus. The Body of Christ is a relationship among all of us, with God and with each other.

(55) I truly believe we are beginning a new, vibrant chapter in the history of the Church of Pittsburgh. God can and does heal us. God can and does restore us. Through the grace of God, listening is an opportunity for the Church of Pittsburgh to grow in humility and holiness. May we be renewed by God's light and truth and restored by God's mercy. May we be *The Church Healing*.

CONCLUSION

(56) I have been asked, "Where is God in all this?" What I know for sure is that God does not abandon any of us. He is most especially close to those who suffer. The actions of the perpetrators of child sexual abuse are evil, deceitful, and mar the God-given dignity of our humanity. God's actions are precisely the opposite. God loves each and every one of us infinitely. God sees the beauty and goodness within each person. God offers grace and mercy when we stumble or fall along the path to holiness. Divine mercy does not preclude human justice. But wherever there is pain, rage, and despair, God is there with us too, waiting and wanting to restore our lives and souls with His goodness and truth, beauty and love. And in this process, God chooses so often to work through all of us.

(57) Clearly, this letter is not and cannot be the final word about *The Church Healing*. It is yet another step, with many behind us and many more before us. The words of a pastoral letter cannot alone rebuild trust. An action plan cannot alone heal the injuries suffered. But I pray that you can trust in my promise that these are the first steps of many that will be taken to restore the Church and to heal the wounds inflicted by sins of abuse. Through continued listening and dialogue to seek the best path forward, through pastoral care and advocacy for victims/survivors of abuse and through the healing of hearts and lives, the Body of Christ that is suffering together can also be renewed together.

(58) I again want to express my deepest anguish for the suffering endured by the victims/survivors of clergy sexual abuse and their families. I hope and pray that this letter demonstrates my commitment to actions that will foster healing and rebuild trust in our Church.

(59) As I began to write, I recalled with you that Jesus cried over the death of his friend, Lazarus. Through His healing power and love Jesus restored Lazarus to life. Jesus also cried over Jerusalem and its need to change. By His death and resurrection, Jerusalem and the world were born anew. Only through Jesus, do all of us have new life and hope.

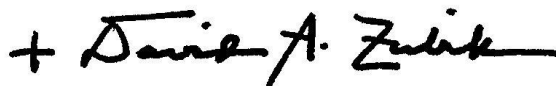
(60) I close by inviting you to join me in turning our hearts to Jesus. At the beginning of each of the four listening sessions we prayed this prayer, whose words still need to be spoken:

(61) No one is far from you, O God. We pray and listen so that those who suffer as a result of abuse committed by members of the clergy might be supported in their healing. We pray for the survivors of abuse who have been psychologically harmed and spiritually damaged by people claiming to be followers of your Son. We pray for the families and friends of those who have been abused as we lament the sorrow they carry because of the injuries inflicted on their loved ones. We pray for all in the Church, both laity and clergy, whose faith has been shaken by the scandal of abuse. We pray that we may be a community that actively cares for and protects children and vulnerable members of our society. We pray for the courage to speak and to hear the truth. We pray for the wisdom to discern how to restore trust in the Church.

(62) May our dear Blessed Lady, the Mother of Jesus, protect us under the mantle of her love and help us to be *The Church Healing*.

Grateful for our belief that “Nothing is Impossible with God,” I am

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ David A. Zubik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

March 6, 2019
Ash Wednesday

