



Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Office of the Bishop

11 North "B" Street
Pensacola, Florida 32502
Office: (850) 435-3520
Fax: (850) 435-3565
Email: bishop@ptdiocese.org

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the Lord. Like you, I watched with horror as the incidents of abuse at the hands of priests and bishops in Pennsylvania over the last seven decades were revealed. Everyone is scrambling to make sense of it, and all of us have questions: Why wasn't this handled once and for all when it was first revealed? What protocols were in place since the Dallas Charter, and were they followed? How could this happen today? What can we do to address this?

I can't simply say that I am shocked and outraged (even those dramatic words sound empty at this point), but neither can I tell you that I have the answers right now. Of course, the answers involved things like: complete transparency, an independent review of all cases, prayer and reform, etc.

Here locally, in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, we have a board of lay people and clergy who investigate claims of abuse and perform audits on an ongoing basis. I believe that all of the allegations of the past in the diocese have been handled according to the Charter. When a new allegation comes out, we have policies and procedures in place, and they are put into action immediately.

What I CAN do right now is pray for all of the victims of abuse at the hands of priests, bishops, and church leaders. This truly is a scandal that deeply offends our Lord and his Church. I can – and will – continue to offer prayers, penance, and my work to helping to find and implement answers to this crisis. And I will continue to try to be a faithful shepherd for this local church.

Please pray for me, as I pray for you every day.

In Christ's Peace,

Most Rev. William A. Wack, CSC