

A LETTER FROM BISHOP NICHOLAS DIMARZIO

As many of you know, our Diocese just published the list of 107 priests who have been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor. These allegations date back as far as 1934.

The majority of these priests are already deceased. Those who are living have either been laicized or permanently removed from active ministry. The names have been published to offer greater transparency and accountability to the Church at large as well as to the general public. In this way, we hope to promote healing and justice.

The Church recognizes the pain that has been caused to those who are victims of child abuse, as well as to their families; the victims have been offered the opportunity for counseling, as well as financial reparation through the special Compensation program (IRCP). As Pope Francis has reminded us, we need to take time to listen to those who have survived this painful trauma, we need to be in solidarity with them in their suffering, and continue to work to prevent this from happening again.

We acknowledge the confusion and anger this has caused many of the faithful of the Church. Difficult as it is, we are doing everything possible to rebuild the trust.

Since 2002 and the “Charter for Protection of Children and Young People,” the Church in the United States has taken many important steps to prevent such abuse from happening in our parishes, programs and schools. Any member of the clergy with a credible allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor is removed from active ministry. Also, every member of the clergy, every lay employee and volunteer who has contact with children is required to undergo a background check (which is now reviewed quarterly) as well as participate in a training program on abuse prevention. We also publicize the independent Reporting line to facilitate filing reports of abuse within our Diocese, which immediately are communicated to civil authorities. That number is: 888-634-4499.

We ask God to watch over us, and to give us the fortitude to face the painful truth of abuse, as we move forward to work for healing and reconciliation.