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December 28, 2018

Mr. Ray Riehle and Mr. Ed Riehle  
6830 Antelope Road, Ste. H  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621

Dear Ray Riehle and Ed Riehle,

Allow me this opportunity to acknowledge your letter of December 2018, received at the Archdiocese of Boston Pastoral Center on December 14, 2018. Along with my pastoral responsibilities in the Archdiocese, in the last few months, my commitments with my fellow bishops and the Council of Cardinals to address the urgent challenges in our Church took precedence. Thank you for your understanding.

First, I want to thank you for sharing from your heart. I am grateful to you for expressing your thoughts very honestly. I also appreciate all the suggestions that you shared in your letter. Please know that some of the issues that you brought up were discussed in the USCCB fall meetings. I assure you that in our February bishops' meeting in Rome, we will take a closer look with a deeper discernment on the recent challenges that struck the heart of the Church that we all love.

Second, I am so very sorry to know that the recent scandals in the Church have so deeply impacted you. Thank you for not giving up on the Church. Please know each day I fervently pray that with my brother bishops we can help to begin the work of repairing the trust of the people of God that has been so badly damaged and betrayed. I also want to take this opportunity to express my personal apology for my faults and failings and those of the Church leadership as evidenced by the reprehensible scandals of the sexual abuse of children and young people by clergy. These are sinful and criminal matters of the highest degree. Your anger and your profound disappointment are justified and fully understandable. The suffering of God's people became more vivid in the last few months when the Church was hit once again so deeply by the sins of sexual abuse and misconduct scandals. Two decades ago, the same arrow struck our local Church. However, these recent issues have caused much deeper wounds because people felt that their trust that such a history was not going to repeat itself was betrayed. No words, no statement, no apology will ever buy a remedy to bring those who have been hurt to wholeness. I accept my share of responsibility for having put you and many other people into such a difficult situation, one that no member of our Church and faith community should have to experience.

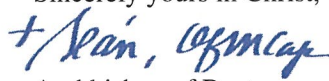
Please know that, both at the Pastoral Center and local parishes, the clergy and the laity are working together to, not only to overcome the ripple effects of the abuse crisis that has wounded the Church, but also by creating concrete steps for protection of children and vulnerable adults. I am hopeful that the Lord will use this journey, along with penitential prayer and fasting, to awaken, as Pope Francis said, ***"Our conscience and arouse our solidarity and commitment to a culture of care that says, 'never again' to every form of abuse."***

Let us pray that the power of the Holy Spirit, Who marked the birth of the Church on Pentecost, make this call of the sanctification of the bishops and priests a vital experience for all, and a sign of hope for the future of the Church that we all love.

May the love Jesus brought to the world that holy night, light your days with joy and peace. Know that you and your loved ones will be remembered in my prayers in a special way during my Christmas Masses.

With the assurance of my prayers for you and all whom you hold dear, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Archbishop of Boston