



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

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December 10, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Riehle,

I have received your recent form-letter. As a man with brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews and grand-nieces and nephews, I am just as dismayed as you at both the alleged abuse and the handling of the abuse reports and cases. The pain and suffering caused by these men is impossible to gauge, not just to their victims, but the families of the victims and other victims of abuse, whether by church leaders, coaches, teachers or family members. The statistics on abuse in our society are staggering and the one place children should have felt safe was in their church. The betrayal of these children is incredibly painful and words of apology are certainly not enough.

You might recall that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles 1985 instituted the first clergy oversight board in the country, a lay professional-led board that continues to monitor allegations and counsel the Archbishop today. I was one of two priest representatives on that board for seven years and can tell you that we were very serious and thorough in our work, using ex-FBI agents to investigate allegations and that the Archbishop always listened to the advice of the board. In 2004, the "Report to the People of God" was issued, outlining the history, as we know it, of sexual abuse by clergy in the archdiocese. This is available on the Archdiocesan website. In 2007, the Archdiocese came to a civil settlement with victims to help them in their recovery and address their pain and suffering. In 2013, and again just recently, the files of every priest against whom an allegation had been made, even false or unsubstantiated allegations were opened and published (also on the website). At the same time, a Grand Jury investigated the abuse issue in Los Angeles and found nothing like what is reported in Pennsylvania. Mistakes were made, but at the time, psychologists, attorneys and law enforcement people believed that after proper treatment, abusers could return to work and ministry. Today, we know that it cannot be treated which led to our zero-tolerance policy in cases of abuse of minors. You might also know that the majority of priests in ministry today were ordained after the historic rise in abuse occurrences that happened in the '50's

and 60's. I have been a priest for 27 years and only recognize names of abuser priests because I have read them in the news. The very few who were still in ministry after I was ordained were taken out very soon afterwards. Throughout this period of time, the Archbishops have reached out to victims for personal apology sessions. For those who do not want anything to do with that, our Victims' Assistance office has provided and paid for counseling. There is a great article that outlines in detail the response of the Archdiocese in the Angelus on-line newspaper. I would encourage you to read it. It is the story that the secular press does not report but it represents where we are today in the Archdiocese. You can use the link: <https://angelusnews.com/news/pablo-kay/abuse-crisis-a-reminder-of-tough-lessons-learned-in-la>

I am not writing this to justify the church's actions in the past. The stories we hear are both heartbreaking and infuriating. Sexual abuse of children, especially by clergy, should never occur and those responsible should be held accountable. I am also not writing it to soften your position on the Church. I believe that we who preach the Gospel should be held to a higher standard than other organizations. My purpose is twofold, first to ask you to pray for the victims who are still in need of healing. As you know, almost all of these cases go back decades and the victims have suffered most of their lives. I have become friends with some of these incredibly brave people. They are the real heroes in this story.

Secondly, I would also ask you that you make sure that you and every adult of your family and every one of your adult friends become VIRTUS trained. There should be no excuses and no exclusions if we are serious about rooting this out in our Church and community. We have required training, background checks and fingerprinting of all clergy, all seminarians, all lay employees, including teachers, and all volunteers in our parishes for the past 20 years. If members of the clergy, staff from our schools and parishes and parents of parish children had been trained on what to look for in boundary violations, grooming and abuse, I believe that the majority of it would not have happened, abusive priests and others would have been identified and immediately removed. But it cannot just stop in our churches. Statistics show that for every victim of clergy sexual abuse there are thousands abused elsewhere. Our efforts should not be confined only to our churches, but to the public sector. That can only happen when we funnel the anger that we are all feeling toward these abuser clergy into a positive response so that this generation of children can grow up in a safer environment. We are not waiting for the Vatican to make these decisions, we are showing them the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marc V. Trudeau". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long horizontal line.

Bishop Marc V. Trudeau