



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

December 18, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Riehle,

Allow me to express greetings along with my gratitude for the recent letter, signed by yourself and Ed Riehle. Your thoughts expressed therein are appreciated as are your concerns for our Church.

The disappointment expressed in your is certainly understood, and the decision to withhold donations to the Church is acknowledged. Further, the requests presented in the said letter have been duly noted.

In your letter, you ask that law enforcement be immediately contacted whenever there is an accusation against a Bishop or a Priest. Please know that, within the Diocese of Venice, any accusations of abuse must first be reported to the Florida Department of Children and Families and law enforcement.

Additionally, all Diocesan employees, as well as volunteers who have contact with children, must undergo a background check and attend Safe Environment Training, which focuses on prevention, detection, and reporting of abuse. A Review Board, led by a lay person and primarily composed of members of the laity, investigates all allegations of sexual abuse of a child by any Diocesan personnel, including clergy.

However, courageous humility is needed to admit that the many strides made in dealing with this serious issue have not yet achieved the desired goal. The Church cannot shrink from her duty to respond effectively to allegations and take every possible step to prevent abuse from occurring. Continued resolve is necessary to make apparent that abuse, of any kind or by anybody, has no place in the Church. Those who cover up misconduct with minors or the vulnerable must be held accountable and accept fitting consequences for their failures.

Please join me in prayer that the Holy Spirit will comfort victims and those whose faith has been shaken as well as endow Church leaders with the courage and humility needed to combat the evil of sexual abuse. Again, thank you for communicating your thoughts on this most serious topic. Have a Blessed Advent Season.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida

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