

HEALED

BY TRUTH

Dear Bishops of the Catholic Church,

When I was a child, my parents did not protect my innocence, and they did not teach me the truth about love and sexuality. It has taken me many years to find hope and healing, and I want to share some thoughts with you.

I know the sex abuse scandals in the Catholic Church have hurt everyone. The whole Church has felt betrayed and confused by those who went against Church teaching and harmed children and vulnerable people. It is unthinkable that a betrayal like this is even possible and that so many people were harmed. It will take time, dedication, and perseverance to heal and reclaim all that was lost.

While Church leadership continues to work through this scandal, I want to point out another great need that is facing the Church at the present time. In the wake of the scandals, another voice has called out to our children in the arena of sexuality: the voice of the world and *the father of lies*. Without your protection and the Church's strong stance, our children have been left to the 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' Our children are being misled and abused by all the predators *outside* the Church.

But this doesn't have to be the case. Many of you have remained faithful and true to both Christ and the Church during this time of scandal. I thank you for this, and I encourage you to embrace your calling to both heal and defend the Church.

It may seem hypocritical for Catholic Bishops to speak out now on issues of sexual morality and child protection, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Everyone

needs to hear the truth about love and sexuality, now more than ever, and only Christ can shed the light of that authentic truth, because *He is the way, the truth, and the life, Jn. 14:6*. You are the protectors and teachers of this Truth.

I understand if you feel uncertain about what will happen next, and I can assure you; this wouldn't be the first time that bishops felt this way. If you are afraid that no one will listen to you if you speak, that may be true. Many have left the Church and have turned away from your voices. But many have stayed. Many have listened and still believe. They are waiting for your voices so they can be *healed by truth*.

As you embrace your calling to defend and educate your flock, I humbly ask that you also support those members of the Church who are doing the same. There are many priests, religious, lay ministers, teachers, and parents who stand by the truth, and who work very hard to protect the young and the vulnerable. Please pray for them. Pray that their voices and their words also reach children and those who need them most.

In closing, I am happy to share that a good friend of mine, Bishop Bill Muhm, from the Archdiocese of the Military Services, U.S.A, stepped into the unknown with me and together we had a deep conversation about child sex abuse, the scandals in the Church, and the gospel message. We published our conversation as a book, *Matthew 18: a conversation between a survivor of childhood sexual abuse and a Catholic Bishop*.

I hope you consider reading it. It brings the light of the gospel message to all those who suffer from abuse in the Church. All the proceeds go to children in crisis around the world, and this book will give you an idea of how bishops, survivors, and the faithful can work together to both heal and build up the Church.

Please be assured of my love and prayers for all of you.

Sincerely your daughter in Christ,

Carrie Bucalo

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