

Bishop Knestout's Pastoral Letter "From Tragedy to Hope"
Direct Actions Addressing the Present Crisis in the Catholic Church

DIRECT ACTIONS:

"Prayer must accompany us through every stage of our actions or responses to the present crisis facing the Church." ~ Bishop Barry Knestout

- Bishop Knestout calls for and presides at Diocesan Mass of Atonement
 - Celebrated Sept. 14, 2018, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond.
 - Hundreds attend Mass to pray for victims of abuse and their healing.
 - The Mass and Bishop's homily can be viewed on [Diocesan YouTube Page/Catholic Diocese of Richmond](#).
- Nine listening sessions & regional Masses of Atonement celebrated with faithful around the Diocese
 - Prior to each regional Mass of Atonement, Bishop Knestout holds listening sessions – nearly 1,000 attended.
 - Bishop celebrates with the faithful across the diocese from Oct. 4-24, 2018.
 - Final regional Mass, Wed. Oct. 24, at St. Joseph's in Petersburg, view Bishop's [homily](#).
 - "I think also in the time that we are experiencing in the Church there is a need, a call, for all the faithful for us to shepherd one another, to assist one another to holiness, to assist one another by our prayers, by our encouragement, by our confrontation, by our honesty, by our calling one another to account but also calling one another to holiness."
- Bishop Knestout calls for prayer and fasting on Fridays throughout the remainder of the year
 - "The first action of any Catholic or Christian should be prayer, turning to God in petition and supplication, intercession and reparation....."
- Bishop Knestout commits to publicizing the names of clergy in our diocese who have received credible and substantiated allegations of abuse
 - "Our diocese is committed to making public the names of those priests from our diocese who have received credible and substantiated allegations of abuse."
- Extensive file review conducted by independent, investigative group experienced in file reviews
 - "There will be a full, extensive audit of clergy files by an independent entity, with oversight by the Diocesan Review Board, which will hold us accountable."
 - "I will do all within my power to work with other bishops to learn the full truth and to share the full extent of the problem with the Church."
- Funds set aside for counseling aid to assist survivors of clergy abuse
 - "Funds are set aside as an abuse victims' assistance fund for counseling aid to those who have experienced abuse from clergy. This fund will be managed by the Diocesan Review Board."

Continuing the Work to Protect Children, Young People & The Most Vulnerable

- Strengthening the [Diocesan Safe Environment Office](#)
- Reinforce ongoing, mandatory training for priests and deacons related to the protection of minors and best practices for working with children.
- Continued implementation of the [existing policies](#), code of conduct, and procedures for evaluating, [reporting](#) and responding to all accusations of abuse

Read Bishop Knestout's [entire Pastoral Letter](#) in which he details many aspects of the current crisis

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