



Diocese of Richmond

Office of the Bishop

June 27, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In recent years, the Church has become vividly aware of the sorrow and suffering associated with child sexual abuse perpetrated by some clergy. In response, I have taken a number of steps to support the survivors who have suffered abuse and help them on their path toward healing. In addition to strengthening our child protection policies, practices, and codes of conduct as well as continuing to provide counseling to survivors of abuse, the Diocese of Richmond earlier this year published a list of clergy against whom there are credible and substantiated claims of child sexual abuse.

Overcoming the tragedy of abuse is not just about holding accountable those who have committed abuses, it is also about seriously examining the role and complex legacies of individuals who should have done more to address the crisis in real time. The continued honorific recognition of those individuals provides a barrier to healing for our survivors, and we want survivors to know that we welcome and support them in our Diocese.

For this reason, effective today I am instructing that an additional step take place. As a policy, all diocesan institutions, its schools, and parish buildings are to be named after one of the saints, the mysteries of the faith, titles of Our Lord and of Our Lady, or the place where the ministry has been established. They are no longer to be named after a pastor, founder, or individual. Any proposed change that varies from this policy would require the review and approval of the bishop.

This policy does not apply to rooms or wings in existing buildings or institutions. Neither does it apply to the listing of historic figures who held an office in the institution or plaques or signs recognizing donors. I am asking local administrators to exercise prudential judgment before making any changes as deemed appropriate. All other Catholic institutions may determine a policy for themselves according to their own statutes and bylaws.

With this in mind, effective today, Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School will return to its former name of Catholic High School. From a practical perspective, I am allowing for a period of transition over the next year to complete all that is necessary to accomplish this name change. It is my hope and prayer the policy change is another way to continue to assist survivors of abuse in their healing, especially those who have, in any way, experienced the failure of Church leadership to adequately address their needs and concerns.

Asking for the intercession of Our Lady and the grace of the Holy Spirit, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond