



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

August 24, 2018

To the Clergy, Religious, and Parishioners of the Diocese of Honolulu

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Peace be with you!

Satan is dancing with great joy! A Cardinal of the Catholic Church is now a former Cardinal because of credible accusations of abuse of minors and using his power to gain sexual favors from various priests and seminarians – while all the while moving up the “ladder” of the hierarchy in respect and prestige. A Pennsylvania Grand Jury report shocks the nation by putting together sexual abuse claims in six dioceses over 60 years, indicating 1,000 minors who were abused by priests or other Church workers and that some bishops covered up the abuse. Some non-Catholics are wondering why anyone would remain a Catholic, and some Catholics have had their faith shaken to the core, doubting the integrity of the bishops and of priests. The Church, which teaches the importance of chastity, the value of every human life from conception to natural death, and the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman, has had its moral authority questioned because of the immorality of many in authority. Some clergy and others now want to have nothing to do with caring for our youth, because they are afraid of being falsely accused of impropriety. Satan is reeling with delight!

This is not to say that “The devil made them do it.” Each guilty person had the free will and the ability to resist temptations to sin and criminal behavior but decided to engage in it anyway. The point is that we must now resist the temptation to dance with the devil! It will lead us farther away from the light and further into darkness.

Yes, anger is legitimate because of these sins and failures and when it motivates us to find ways to eliminate this scourge once and for all; but it crosses the line into the diabolical when the anger is cultivated for its own sake and becomes a weapon that unjustly judges the many faithful and dedicated priests who serve us, leaves our youth abandoned, or even questions the teachings of the Church because of the failings of its teachers.

While Pennsylvania has been the focus of the recent round of scandalous news, we have to shamefully admit that abuse of minors by clergy and Church workers took place here in Hawaii as well. Some who are living among us are bearing the deep wounds of this abuse, or they are no longer among us because they have given up on us. To them I, as the bishop of this diocese, offer my sincerest apologies for the actions of those who wounded not only their psyches but

their very souls, in many cases driving them away from a Church that is meant to embrace them in the name of Jesus.

I want to assure you that we are doing all we can to see that these things never happen again and to reach out compassionately to those who were victims of these sins and crimes. The Diocese of Honolulu has had policies and procedures for dealing with these crimes even before the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued our *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in 2002. We have a full time Director of Safe Environment, and we have trained everyone who has contact with children or youth – including all clergy – to safeguard our youth, respect proper boundaries, and report any suspected violations of our standards. An outside auditor has audited our compliance with this program annually since 2004, and we have been in full compliance every year. We have a Victim Assistance Coordinator who helps those who have been abused find a voice and work toward healing. Please see our diocesan website: www.catholichawaii.org and at the bottom of the home page click on “Child and Youth Protection” for more information. We are doing all we can do to make sure these patterns of abuse do not continue one more day.

Above all, let us dedicate ourselves to prayer and fasting, first for the healing of all survivors of this terrible abuse, and then for our beloved Church, that true reform and healing may be hers as well. Let us never be afraid to be with our youth, who need and want the guidance of good role models, both clerical and lay.

Finally, I have further thoughts about this matter that I have put into a more extended reflection. I encourage you to read it on the diocesan website under “Child and Youth Protection.” Let us put our faith in the Lord Jesus, who alone can heal what seems impossible to heal and who can even raise the putrid death to life again. Let us dance with him, because he alone will dance us into the light and into the fullness of truth.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Silva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu