



TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN

September 20, 2018

Dear Family of the Archdiocese of New York:

Over this difficult summer, I've done a lot of listening. Many of you have told me that you are upset, angry, bewildered, and frustrated about the ongoing crisis of sexual abuse in the Church. I am not afraid to say that so am I. This has been a painful period for all Catholics. Some of you may have heard me talk about my own mother, now 90 years old and in assisted living, telling me that she's embarrassed, as a Catholic, to go into the dining room with her fellow residents.

Most stinging, though, is hearing, "Cardinal Dolan, we are beginning to lose trust in you bishops." And without that trust, I don't have a lot left.

Yes, since 2002, the Church has made great strides in combating the crime and sin of sexual abuse of minors, especially by "zero tolerance" of any guilty priest, deacon, or bishop, and by reaching out to victim-survivors, who must remain our first concern. I will be announcing some new initiatives today on how to enhance our efforts to protect children as well as vulnerable adults. I will be putting my statement on my blog at www.cardinaldolan.org, and I hope you take the time to learn about what we're doing, and that this becomes a good first step in strengthening that trust. But this brief letter is not meant to defend our record or provide a comprehensive list of programs and abuse prevention efforts. There will be time for that later.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that, as your archbishop, I am with you, and I am committed to *transparency, accountability, and action*. That's what I've heard you request.

Last week, I had the sad duty of celebrating the funeral Mass of a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, who died way-too-soon at the age of 49. There were several dozen priests present, and, as you would probably expect, the Church's current crisis was a major topic of discussion.

As the procession made its way down the center aisle at the start of Mass, I was moved and inspired by the huge number of people who were there to pray for the repose of the soul of a man they knew to be a good and faithful priest, and to thank God for the gift of his priesthood. The congregation even stood in a prolonged ovation for him at the end of Mass. "Cardinal

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Dolan,” the pastor said to me, “The people here loved Father Charlie. They love their faith and their priests. They just want to know that the bishops understand the problem and are acting correctly.”

A good reminder.

Might I ask for your prayers -- first and foremost for the victim-survivors of abuse, but also for all of our good and faithful priests and deacons who are suffering, and, finally, for me as your archbishop that the Holy Spirit will guide me as, together, we face this current crisis.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Tim. Card. Dolan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a cross at the beginning.

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan

Archbishop of New York