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**Bishop Wack's Statement on the Summit in Rome to Address the
"Protection of Minors in the Church," held Feb. 21-24, 2019**

Now that the summit on the Protection of Minors in the Church has concluded in Rome, I thought it best to share some of my thoughts with our local church.

First, I commend Pope Francis for convening this gathering of the presidents of the conferences of bishops throughout the world. Tragically, this is not just a problem in the United States or even the West; it is part of the fabric of our Church and world. We must address this scourge and horrific sin together as the body of Christ. And while this means that swift action on every issue is not taken immediately, I am hopeful that it will lead to the eradication of abuse and cover-up everywhere in our beloved Church.

I was pleased that many victims/survivors were able to tell their stories and share their anger and grief with the bishops and with the Pope. Before anything can happen, we have to be aware of what this sin has done to individuals, families, parishes and the universal Church. When one listens to an account of how a person has been abused or hurt in the past, it moves your heart in a profound way and causes you to join with them in eradicating this horrific sin.

I realize that many people were hoping for something more definitive and tangible from this conference. I must admit, I was of that opinion as well. At the same time, I knew that the goal of the summit was to raise awareness of this on a worldwide level, and then to assure that individual conferences (like the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) would address it as soon as possible. We had hoped to do that at our meeting in Baltimore last November, but we were told to wait until this conference was held in Rome. I am very hopeful that we will again focus on this exclusively when we meet again in June.

As sad as it is to say, other conferences and countries have a long way to go to catch up to what has been done in the United States over the last 20 years. Since the implementation of the Dallas Charter in 2002, great strides have been made concerning the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The vast majority of what we have been hearing about recently occurred many years ago. Having said that, however, it is clear that we have a lot of work to do.

As a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, I believe in the power of the cross of Christ. Our Lord accepted the scandal of the cross and carried it nobly and died for our sakes. Because of this, God crowned him with glory higher than the heavens – and opened the way for all of us to receive the same eternal beatitude. As we carry this cross today, may God strengthen our resolve and once again show us the resurrection and new life.