



Go Make Disciples

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

March 16, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Following guidance from Pope Francis's apostolic letter, *Vos estis lux mundi* (You are the light of the world), the bishops of the United States met this past fall to address the issue of sexual abuse and bishop accountability in the global Catholic Church. The result of that meeting is the creation of a third-party reporting system to specifically report and assess allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct with minors by bishops.

Though we have made significant progress on many fronts since the 2002 publication of the U.S. bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," we needed to extend the same concern to allegations against bishops. The new third-party reporting system called Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service will handle and assess reports of abuse of minors involving current or retired bishops. Those reporting can remain anonymous.

The new reporting system, which launched on March 16, is a further development of our commitment as your shepherds to creating and maintaining safe environments for our children, our vulnerable adults and for all parishioners. The new reporting service holds us accountable and furthers the transparency that our parishioners demand and deserve.

We continue to express our profound sorrow and most sincere apologies to each person who has ever been a victim of sexual abuse by anyone representing the Church, and for the complicity and negligence of those who failed to respond adequately to reports of abuse. As bishops, we also grieve for the countless faithful, dedicated and generous priests who have faced ridicule and suspicion because of the terrible crimes of their brothers.

If you or anyone you know has been abused by a member of the clergy or anyone representing the Church, please call your diocese's pastoral response hotline and the proper civil authorities.

With the assurance of my continued prayers, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City