

**THE PASTORAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
55 WEST 15TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011-6801**

November 16, 2018

Very Rev. John J. Cecero, S.J.
Provincial
The USA Northeast Province
of the Society of Jesus
39 East 83rd Street
New York, NY 10028

Dear Fr. Cecero:

We members of the Pastoral Council at the Church of St. Francis Xavier write from a recent epicenter of the pain and disruption caused by the misconduct of clergy. As we have learned since the mid-1980s abuse scandal in Louisiana, misconduct has ranged from unwanted attention and boundary violations to predatory, serial physical abuse. With the national disclosures this past summer, we learned the extent to which church leaders protected abusers and buried information about credible claims of abuse ostensibly in the name of protecting the faithful and the institutional Church. Their actions had the opposite result. Children remained the prey of predators and the institutional Church is now in crisis due to the moral failure of Church leadership to openly expose the predators and address the institutional causes of the aberrant conduct.

During our recent experience of Fr. Bob VerEecke's removal as our pastor, our faith community, including the Jesuits who join with us, trusted that the disclosure of misconduct information to the parish community at the earliest opportunity was an important value. Another value was to name the reality of the misconduct in as transparent a manner as the obligations of confidentiality allow. As painful as the process has been, we believe we are healing as a community and able to pray for Fr. Bob and the victim in a manner consistent with the Gospel.

Recently, Fr. Ed Quinnan spent an evening with us discussing the challenges we as a parish and as members of the larger Church face in addressing the institutional Church crisis. The meeting was collaborative and, we believe, mutually beneficial. Among the items discussed, we urged Fr. Ed to communicate to you the importance of releasing the names of Jesuits in the Northeast Province against whom credible claims of sexual abuse of minors have been made. Not long after our meeting, Fr. Scott Santarosa, S.J., Provincial of the USA West Province, announced that on December 7, 2018 the province will release the names of Jesuits from the province against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse were made dating back to 1950.

We write to urge you to follow Fr. Santarosa's lead and release the names of Jesuits from the now-merged New England and New York provinces dating from 1950 to the present against

whom credible claims of sexual abuse of minors have been made. Similar to the West province, it would enhance the credibility of the release to engage an outside entity to conduct an external review to confirm that the identities of all Jesuits who meet the criteria are identified.

It is the charism of the Society of Jesus in difficult times to show the way to Jesus and the Holy Spirit who, in turn, lead all of us to greater love and service of God. Your release of names will encourage and lead to healing the members of the larger Jesuit community. And, your actions may encourage the Church leadership to themselves take the critical first steps in the repentance and penance process that the leaders of the institutional Church must experience in cleansing themselves of the sins that lead to this crisis.

Please know that you and all your brother Jesuits are in our prayers,

The Pastoral Council of the Church of St. Francis Xavier