



CARDINAL'S OFFICE
66 BROOKS DRIVE
BRAINTREE, MASSACHUSETTS 02184-3839
617-782-2544

January 4, 2012

My dear friends in Christ,

Ten years ago, in the early days of 2002, a problem with a history far deeper than any of us had imagined, that had been wreaking havoc along its course, exploded in the Church. We never can and never will forget our shock and revulsion at the revelations that for decades, children had been subjected to sexual abuse, devastating their lives and those of their families and loved ones. The magnitude of these horrendous crimes was made even greater by the abuse having been perpetrated by Catholic priests, who shattered the bond of trust placed in them by the people they had promised to serve.

As a Church we must continue to express the depth of our sorrow and contrition for how badly we failed those entrusted to our care. I reflect on this in my prayer every day. As leaders in the Church we must accept our responsibility for those failings and clearly acknowledge that Church leadership could have and should have responded more quickly and more forcefully. We cannot change the tragic implications of past failures, but we must, we can and we will do everything in our power to ensure that these crimes, these sins, never occur in the community of the Church again.

We are deeply indebted to the scores of people who during the past ten years have taken leadership in planning and implementing child safety protection programs for our parishes, schools and social service agencies. These dedicated personnel and volunteers have given countless hours to training adults across the Archdiocese in order that the protection programs are "always and everywhere" in the life of the Church. In particular, these efforts have been greatly aided by the men and women of our community who responded with fortitude, determination and unflinching resolve. They rightfully made clear in the earliest days of the crisis that nothing short of complete and total protection for children would be acceptable if we were to go forward together.

We are also indebted to the priests of the Archdiocese who have been and continue to be good and faithful servants to the people of God. Our priests have remained true to their mission and their calling while carrying many burdens because of the crimes of some of their colleagues. They are to be commended for their service in the midst of great turmoil that also deeply impacted them.

Our commitment to uphold the moral standard of the Church and the civil statutes in all matters concerning child safety is absolute. There is no place for compromise or equivocation concerning the welfare of children and young people. We have learned much during the course of the past ten years and made sweeping and significant changes to all dimensions of the life of the Church, but we cannot be lulled into a sense of achievement that would risk complacency. It is my solemn pledge that at all times and in all places we will be vigilant in the protection of children, our responsibility to God and the community demands nothing less.

Today we have published a document entitled, “Ten Years Later – Reflections on the Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Archdiocese of Boston”, providing a summary of the actions taken in response to the crisis. The document also addresses the survivors of sexual abuse and their loved ones, those whose lives were most deeply impacted, and people in the Church and the wider community who played important roles in bringing the crisis to light and providing us helpful guidance.

We offer the reflections for your review and consideration. They are not and are not intended to be a final word or the closing of a chapter. There will never be a time to presume that the crisis is over or behind us. The reflections are presented as a marker on a path that will be travelled every day of our lives and the lives of those who will follow us, a path of healing, rebuilding trust, and renewing ourselves in the presence of the Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean O'Malley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Archbishop of Boston