

March 7, 2013

BishopAccountability.org
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His Eminence Sean Patrick Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Boston
Archdiocese of Boston
66 Brooks Drive
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Your Eminence,

We write first to thank you for courageous statements you made Tuesday. You told *The Boston Globe* that “there needs to be a path” for disciplining bishops, and you asserted that “it’s something the next pope will have to deal with.” As you told the *Wall Street Journal*, without a global policy, “improvising” will cause many more people to be hurt in this “minefield.”

We are cc'ing your fellow U.S. cardinals, in the hope that they will follow your example of candor.

You were affirming what to millions of Catholics and victims is an obvious truth. Yet no other cardinal has been so blunt publicly about the need to hold complicit bishops accountable. You surely have caused consternation among some of your fellow cardinals – and risked taking yourself out of the running to be Pope – but your brave statement will reverberate throughout the conclave and hearten Catholics around the world.

You also spoke candidly this week about the next pope’s “monumental task” of mandating sex abuse policies in every Catholic diocese – policies, you said, that must be well-written, carefully reviewed, and strictly implemented.

As researchers of the global Catholic abuse crisis who happen to live and attend Mass in the Boston archdiocese, we have studied your performance with particular care and challenged you frequently in the last ten years. Today we note with appreciation that you have broken new ground, and we write to encourage you to continue this bold push, both publicly and in conclave. Launch a discussion that examines not only the strengths but the failings of the system that you and your U.S. colleagues have tried and tested for the last ten years. The worldwide church must benefit from what you have learned. In particular, we urge you vigorously to support three much-needed improvements to the current US system:

1. Require every diocese and religious order to publish complete lists of credibly accused clerics, and establish rigorous standards for those lists. In 2011 you published a list of Boston archdiocesan priests publicly accused of abuse – an important step that had been taken by about two dozen other U.S. bishops. But by your own admission, it does not include 91 priests whose allegations have not yet been publicized, and it does not include religious order priests. As a result, your list is not fully accomplishing its purposes – to protect children, to help victims heal, and to fulfill your promise of transparency. A policy of true episcopal responsibility must encode better standards for diocesan lists of accused priests.

2. Narrow the loophole that enables accused U.S. priests to stay in ministry. It is widely assumed that US bishops now remove priests following receipt of a credible allegation. But in fact, the zero tolerance provision in the U.S. bishops’ norms (Essential Norm 8) allows a priest to stay in ministry unless abuse is either admitted or “established” following a

canonical process, a process that can take months or years. This is why Cardinal Rigali was able to leave 37 accused priests in ministry until 2011, and why you were in compliance when you left 23 accused priests in ministry in your first 30 months as archbishop in Boston. Norm 8 is deceptive and endangers children. We urge you to speak to it bluntly, before the current U.S. system becomes the model for the universal church. Help create an opportunity for the next pope to close this loophole.

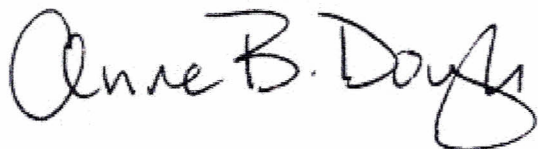
3. Make mandatory reporting the law of the universal church. Right now, contrary to popular perception, even the U.S. norms require merely 'compliance with applicable civil laws.' (Essential Norm 11) In jurisdictions where priests are not required to report, this weak language becomes another loophole, allowing church officials to continue to hide abuse.

We hope you continue to speak boldly and responsibly in Rome – and that you lead your fellow cardinals in choosing a pope who will implement a tough new policy worldwide that will share the virtues of the US system with the universal church, while correcting its serious problems. The minefields you speak of exist most perilously in countries where the abuse crisis has not yet been faced, but they remain in U.S. dioceses too.

Finally, we hope that you will support a new and transparent approach to the work of the CDF, which should: maintain public lists of all priests, past, present, and future, who are laicized or ordered to live a life of prayer and penance; maintain a public list of all cases under CDF review; announce all the CDF's abuse case decisions in a timely manner; and release pertinent case documents when a priest is laicized or disciplined.

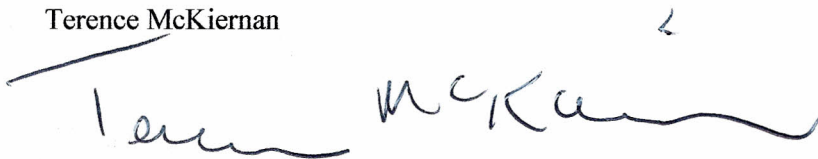
Sincerely,

Anne Barrett Doyle



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Terence McKiernan



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cc: Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Daniel Nicholas Cardinal DiNardo, Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan, Francis Eugene Cardinal George, O.M.I., William Joseph Cardinal Levada, Roger Michael Cardinal Mahony, Edwin Frederick Cardinal O'Brien, Justin Francis Cardinal Rigali, Donald William Cardinal Wuerl