



Diocese of Brownsville

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To the faithful of the Diocese of Brownsville,

The Diocese of Brownsville is releasing names of those members of the clergy credibly accused of abuse of a minor since 1965, the year the Diocese was founded. This is part of a commitment all the bishops of Texas made in September 2018. This is a painful day for the Church, yet one we must face.

As I said last October, an accurate accounting of the past is necessary for us to move forward with integrity. I and the bishops in Texas believe that releasing the names after an exhaustive review of the files will contribute to restore trust and healing. The humble and honest acceptance of the truth calls us to move forward in poverty of spirit for purification and renewal. We must think of the victims first and be sensitive to any renewed pain this release may cause.

This communication of names is directed to the parishes of the diocese so that the Catholic faithful can be assured that nothing is hidden in the files to the detriment of young people, and that the protocols of the Dallas Charter of 2002 are being fully implemented. All the personnel files of priests, deacons and bishops were examined by a review team appointed by the bishop. The review team was comprised of seven lay women and one layman, all with experience in the education and protection of young people. They were assisted in their work by the Chancellor and our Victims Assistance Coordinator. The review team looked at every file independently. They were given full access to all clergy files in the Diocese of Brownsville, 889 clergy in all (seven bishops, 711 priests, 171 deacons).

Their report, which is available on our diocesan website (cdob.org), names 14 clergy credibly accused since 1965. All the cases, with the exception of one, occurred before the year 2002. The Diocese of Brownsville has no credibly accused cleric in active ministry. The review team had access to everything the diocese has in its files. I am grateful to the review team for their many hours of arduous and detailed work. They have generously done the Church a great service, at great personal cost. Credibly accused does not necessarily mean guilty beyond doubt; it means there is evidence the abuse likely happened.

The review team presented me with the information they found in the files, and I ordered it published, in accord with the decision of all the bishops of Texas. I again express my profound sorrow on behalf of the Church. One victim is too many. There is great suffering associated to each case. As we move forward, we remain firm in our commitment to take care of those who are most vulnerable in our midst. Our Victims Assistance Coordinator stands ready to assist anyone who at any time brings an allegation of abuse forward.

I am grateful for the example, prayer and ministry of so many faithful priests, deacons and bishops since the founding of the diocese in 1965. In these times of sorrowful purification, we know that by prayer and penance we journey together in the Lord. As I shared with you in September in a letter published in our diocesan newspaper, it is necessary now more than ever, that we dedicate ourselves anew as a people of faith to the work the Lord has commended to us, to bind the wounds of the broken-hearted and announce the power of His grace that is greater than any evil. Let us preach the Gospel, serve the poor, practice evangelical virtues, pray for sinners, and always hope in the triumph of grace over sin. Let us ask the Virgin Mother of God, Our Lady of Sorrows, to help us persevere in the faith, hope and charity given us in her Son, Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

+Daniel E. Flores
Bishop of Brownsville