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*The Catholic Diocese of Victoria in Texas and the
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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I've now read the first 115 pages of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report on the Church's response to clergy abuse. The stories are violent and demonstrate leaders who seem more concerned with protecting the image of the institution than spiritually caring for the victims. The actions reported are horrible, and I also realize this report will be used by many to advance their own causes.

I want to share with you a few of my initial thoughts:

1. Sexual abuse is a horrible crime against the dignity of the human person. Since 2002, when the reports came out of Boston, the Church has tried hard to be a leader in promoting the safety and health of all people, especially the most vulnerable. We need to remain committed to that, even as we are deeply disheartened and discouraged by the sickness revealed in this report.
2. The cover-up by leaders is equally troubling. Here in Texas a report of abuse of a child must be reported immediately. There is not an exception for the Church. If you are aware of any situation that needs to be reported, please contact your local authority or you can contact Vicki Pyatt, the Coordinator of Pastoral Care and Outreach for the Diocese of Victoria, at 361-827-7176 or email at pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org. She is the initial contact point for those who have experienced clergy abuse and is trained to assist people in these most difficult situations. Since the Charter of 2002 was established we are audited annually to ensure there are no unreported cases.
3. I personally met with Bishop Fellhauer and Fr. Janak and they confirmed to me that since the Charter every allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by clergy, within the Diocese of Victoria, has been reported to the proper police authorities and brought to the Diocesan Review Board. The majority of the Diocesan Review Board are lay people with specific competencies to make clear judgments.

Trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially in the most difficult of times, let us keep each other in prayer. Let us also once again entrust our hearts to Mary, praying and acting for God's healing grace for all God's children,

+Brendan J. Cahill

Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria