



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

October 28, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As you may be aware, “Spotlight,” a movie about the *Boston Globe* investigation into child sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of Boston, is set for release in November. For many people, this film will elicit feelings of sadness and anger and will serve as a painful reminder of the horrible abuse perpetrated by those whom others had every right to trust, members of the Catholic priesthood.

I write this letter first to express my profound regret and to apologize for the grave harm endured by those who suffered as a result of the terrible crime of child sexual abuse in the Church. The pain, heartbreak, and shame that I feel are difficult for me to put into words. My hope and prayer is that the victims and survivors of sexual abuse and their families are acknowledged and able to find the healing they so richly deserve.

To those who still suffer in silence due to past abuse, I humbly invite you to come forward so that we can assist you in healing. The diocesan Office for Healing and Pastoral Care is staffed by a clinical social worker and offers caring and compassionate pastoral support, advocacy, and other resources to those who were sexually abused as a minor by clergy or others representing the Church and to their families. This office can be reached by calling 663-0110.

I also wish to share with you some of the child protection efforts that we have undertaken since the time period depicted in this movie. Today, all allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy, religious, or lay employees or volunteers are reported to the civil authorities, regardless of whether the abuse occurred recently or in the distant past, and we remove from ministry anyone who admits or is found to have engaged in sexual abuse of a minor. Since 2001, we have required that all clergy, as well as all employees and volunteers who regularly work with children, undergo training in how to recognize sexual abuse and report it to the civil authorities. To date, in New Hampshire alone, more than 35,000 clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers have been trained. We also teach personal safety lessons in all of our Catholic schools and religious education programs to help children and young people build respect for self and others and know to whom to report inappropriate behavior. And we conduct background checks on all clergy and on all employees and volunteers who regularly work with minors.

I invite you to visit our website at www.catholienh.org/child-safety to learn more about the Church’s safe environment efforts, for resources that you as an individual or parish can use to join in praying for victims, and for information about how to make a report of abuse to the civil authorities and to the Church.

I am deeply grateful to the hundreds of people, including safe environment coordinators, principals, pastors, Diocesan Review Board members, Safe Environment Council members, parish and school staff, members of the Safe Environment staff, and all of our parish, school, and camp volunteers who work together every day to ensure that children entrusted to our care are safe in our

Church. Please pray for them and for me, and be assured that we will continue to honor the commitments that we have made to ensure a safe environment for all people in the Church and remain vigilant even after public attention is not on the Church.

And most especially, please join with me in praying for those who have been harmed and for their families, that the Lord may ease their pain and heal their wounds.

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Libasci".

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Bishop of Manchester