



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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August 29, 2018

Dear Faithful of the Archdiocese,

Last Sunday witnessed what many are calling a “bombshell” in the Church: the publication of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò’s “Testimony,” alleging corruption and coverup at all levels of the Church based on his long and extensive personal knowledge.

I came to know Archbishop Viganò well during the years he served as Apostolic Nuncio here in the United States. I can attest that he is a man who served his mission with selfless dedication, who fulfilled well the Petrine mission entrusted to him by the Holy Father to “strengthen his brothers in the faith,” and who would do so at great personal sacrifice and with absolutely no consideration given to furthering his “career” – all of which speaks to his integrity and sincere love of the Church. Moreover, while having no privileged information about the Archbishop McCarrick situation, from information I do have about a very few of the other statements Archbishop Viganò makes, I can confirm that they are true. His statements, therefore, must be taken seriously. To dismiss them lightly would continue a culture of denial and obfuscation. Of course, to validate his statements in detail a formal investigation will have to be conducted, one that is thorough and objective. I am therefore grateful to Cardinal DiNardo for recognizing the merit of finding answers that are “conclusive and based on evidence,” and I join my voice to that of other bishops in calling for such an investigation and for taking any corrective action that may be necessary in light of its findings.

I was named a bishop on July 5, 2002, three weeks after the USCCB meeting in Dallas that approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and still at the height of the drama of revelations of sex abuse of minors by clergy.

At that time, I was asked to conduct a prayer service at the conclusion of a conference on family life hosted by the diocese that attracted participants from around the world. I met there an Australian priest with whom I was acquainted during our years of study in Rome, and he congratulated me on my appointment. I replied, “Thank you, but this is not a good time to become a bishop.” I will never forget his response to me: “But it is a good time to be a great bishop.”

What he said to me then can be said to every Catholic at this time. The Church is in need of purification. Purification is always painful. My dear victims: you know this more than anyone; please know of our prayers and love for you, and that we continue to be here for you, to support you and help you to heal with the resources we have available.

I believe God is beginning this painful process of purification for us now, but for it to work, we must cooperate. God has always raised up great saints in similar times of turmoil in the Church. I call on all of us to rededicate ourselves to prayer, penance and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, so that God will bless us with this grace.

Please know of my gratitude to you all: to you our priests, who remain close by your people, lending them support and pastoral care in this time of crisis; to you our deacons, who assist priests in this responsibility and bring the Gospel to those for whom it would otherwise be inaccessible; to you our victims assistance coordinators and to all who support victims on the painful path toward healing; to the faculty and administration of St. Patrick's Seminary for your hard work in providing deep and healthy formation for our future priests for the renewal of the Church in our corner of the Lord's vineyard, and to our seminarians for your fervor and generosity in responding to the Lord's call of priestly service; and last but not least, to you, our people, for your prayer, for your love and concern for the Church, which now moves you to demand change that is effective and decisive, and for your support of our priests.

May God grant us all the grace to be the agents of change and purification that He is calling us to be at this time.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salvatore J. Cordileone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a cross at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco