

DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 22, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this letter, I want to address the sorrowful wound of clergy sexual abuse and seek forgiveness for the sins of the Church in order to assist in healing and share with you where we are now. Allow me to first address where we are now.

Since my arrival as your Bishop, I have shared my desire to make our diocese the safest diocese in the world for children. The recent Synodal listening sessions have confirmed my own impression that many faithful Catholics remain suspicious of both the local and global Catholic Church, as a result of the clergy sex abuse scandal.

With the guidance and support of the Diocesan Review Board, we have updated our 2020 Safe Environment Policy and our Code of Conduct. The new policies go into effect on January 1, 2023. Regularly reviewing and updating our policies is one way we evaluate current practices and look for opportunities to improve. But we must remain vigilant and continue to do all we can to both prevent future abuse and support victim-survivors who were abused as minors by clergy.

Throughout my priesthood, I have had the opportunity to minister directly to victim-survivors of sexual abuse by clergy. It has been a humbling and painful experience in listening to the pain and suffering of those abused as children and the impact those events played in their lives.

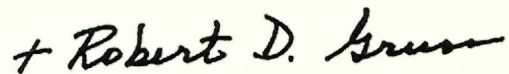
This spring, in celebrating a Mass for Atonement, I asked for forgiveness, and I apologized to all victim-survivors and their families on behalf of the Church. None of us will ever know the depth of the pain that survivors endure. As Bishop of Saginaw, I have met with victim-survivors, who have shared with me the suffering they have experienced, often in silence, with fear that they would be blamed or misjudged. If you are a victim-survivor reading this now, please know of my prayers for you. If you have not yet come forward, I encourage you to contact law enforcement and the Attorney General. If you wish, our Victim Assistance Coordinator is here to assist you and ensure you receive professional assistance.

In 2018, the Diocese of Saginaw published a list on its website of clergy credibly accused of abuse of a minor. This list has been updated over the years and will continue to be updated as warranted, to include any additional priests, including deceased priests, against whom a credible allegation has been made.

With a sincere desire to continue to do all I can to work toward healing and reconciliation, the attached Report is a summary of the instances of child sexual abuse by clergy in this Diocese. The Report contains information from our own records and website, as well as a history of Safe Environment practices in our Diocese. Child sexual abuse is criminal and sinful; I offer no commentary or defense. I do offer my apology and ask for your forgiveness. The Report has been written in a manner that will not intrude on the privacy of victim-survivors or their families. For that reason, identifying information, such as family names, location and specific dates has been excluded.

I ask that we all continue to pray for victim-survivors and their families that they will know the peace and healing that only Our Lord Jesus Christ can give. I also invite you to pray for clergy innocent of wrongdoing who carry the emotional and spiritual burden of their abusive brother priests. May they cling to the True High Priest.

Sincerely in the peace and joy of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert D. Gruss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw