



DIOCESE OF THUNDER BAY

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My dear Catholic people,

In the past weeks there has been much news and reporting about the sexual abuse of minors by priests and bishops in our church. Most of this news comes from investigations in the United States and from other countries in the world. However, even in Canada we have had to deal with this issue including in our own diocese.

The news is not only horrific and tragic, but it brings great sadness to all of us in the church, especially to the clergy who are working faithfully for the good of the community. The bishops of Canada have responded to some of these reports in a letter which can be found at their website (ccc.ca). Even Pope Francis has responded with a letter noting the sadness and hurt this brings to the entire church when bishops and priests are unfaithful to their call, and bring harm to innocent members of our church community.

Thankfully each diocese in Canada has established clear and concise protocols which have been in effect for many years now, to respond to any accusations of abuse of a minor, an adult or any vulnerable person in our community. The Diocese of Thunder Bay has its protocol clearly noted on our website (dotb.ca) under policies, for all to see.

But even with protocols and directives, there is a need for much healing and correction in all the church at this critical time. Everyone is encouraged to pray for our church and for its leaders, especially for Pope Francis in his important role. As the bishop of our diocese I am suggesting that each one of us, each day, pray one Our Father and one Hail Mary for healing and direction for our church. It is a simple yet powerful action, for we know that prayer can move hearts and bring much healing. I also recommend that we receive Holy Communion more frequently to strengthen us with grace against sin and any temptation.

Let us always remember in our prayers and thoughts anyone who is hurting or feeling abused by our church. May we show great compassion and sincere love to them as we work together to make sure that everyone feels safe and welcome in the Catholic Church. May Our Lady of Charity pray for us, especially at this time of need.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Fred J. Colli

Most Reverend Fred J. Colli
Bishop of Thunder Bay