

September 1, 2018

Dear Friends of the Abbey,

The revelations of the grand jury report in Pennsylvania represent the gravest of sins in our Church. As a priest and now an Abbot, I feel shame that the behavior of so many priests hurt so many victims, especially children. While all sin is forgiven by God, the People of God deserve better from us. Even though this report covered a handful of dioceses in one state, I believe it requires action on the part of all Church leaders. And we, as leaders, must be held accountable.

St. Norbert Abbey continues to fully cooperate with local authorities in the case of an accusation. I plan to convene all members of the Abbey Review Board, comprised of lay and Religious (including one Norbertine), to review our procedures and to recommend any additional actions our Norbertine community should take. We need to be vigilant, cooperative and clear about how we will handle credible accusations.

I will also be talking with members of our Abbey and our Spirituality Center about ways to support the healing process for victims. Our Abbey needs to be a place of prayerful healing. We Norbertines will offer daily prayer for all victims.

Bishop Ricken's letter to our diocese expressed the same outrage that I feel. I concur that our Church leaders must make reform and accountability the centerpiece of their fall meetings. We Norbertines will work with the Bishops to rebuild the trust of the people we serve. Our Abbey will continue to fully cooperate with law enforcement and abide by the standards set by our Church. We will also invite the periodic review of our community by Praesidium, an independent, national group that works with Religious and dioceses to comply with these standards.

Earlier in my ministry, I stood before parishioners and spoke from my heart about the sadness I felt as the sex abuse cases were revealed in Boston. Today I feel shame for the church, its leaders and those who fail to stand with all who are victims of this tragic sin. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we all need one another to heal and to grow closer to Jesus. If we Norbertines can help you heal, we stand prepared to journey with you and together "walk humbly with our God."

In Christ, through Mary,

Rt. Rev. Dane J. Radecki, O. Praem.
Abbot – St. Norbert Abbey