



*Humbly welcome the Word that has been planted in you
and is able to save your souls (James 1:21).*

September 1, 2024

Dearest Sisters and Brothers:

St. James tells us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. He says, “Humbly welcome the Word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls” (James 1:21). This is how we are called to live as we are born sacred through, with and in our triune God.

Each year I renew my commitment to safeguard you, God’s holy people. I do not do this alone but am entrusted with the gift of each one of you to assist me, for it is you who labor in the Lord’s name to create a safe environment and to continue the accompaniment of victim survivors.

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the Diocese of Orlando Safe Environment Policy and Procedure are living documents, lumen of Jesus’ healing touch, for we participate in its foundation in communion with one another toward furthering the mission of the Church – to profoundly care for one another.

Let us remain vigilant as we affirm the hallowed essence of each person. We profess our call to sustain and strengthen a safe environment within the Church for children and young people. We pray that all our thoughts, words and deeds continue to heal the body of Christ for as we pledge to heal we become pilgrims of hope.

May our every effort lead us to be reconciled to God and one another. May they bear fruit yielding mercy and compassion as we are held in the name of Jesus.

We ask Mary, Mother of God, the Patroness of the Diocese of Orlando, to be with us on our journey and guide us as she advocates for the protection of all God’s people, especially children and young people.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando



October 4, 2018

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

You are precious because you are created by God for God! Because of our relationship through, with, and in God, we receive a sacred dignity which we are each called to honor through all our lives. That is why you and I are committed to flourishing the well-being of all God's people. For me personally, it is especially important to keep safe our vulnerable populations. Our Diocese of Orlando Safe Environment Policy was created for this purpose.

I come to you today as your Shepherd, to share that I have learned Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, will be conducting an investigation into the policies, procedures, and practices that have long been in place in the Diocese of Orlando to protect against child and vulnerable adult abuse and to investigate allegations of misconduct. The other dioceses in the state will face similar investigations.

I have assured the statewide prosecutor working on this matter that we are committed to cooperating in any investigation the Florida Attorney General may pursue.

Among other things we have shared and will share with the statewide prosecutor are the following:

- In 1995, the Diocese of Orlando created a Lay Review Board to oversee policy creation and review allegations of sexual misconduct.
- In 1997, the Diocese of Orlando began Safe Environment Training and the fingerprinting of clergy, religious, lay staff and volunteers.
- Our policy dictates that when we are informed of an allegation of abuse, we follow Florida law.
- When a credible allegation of sexual abuse by any Church Personnel is received, the individual is removed from ministry, volunteer activity, or employment.
- The Diocese of Orlando is audited annually by an independent auditor to assure our safe environment practices are followed.

These are just a few examples of the policies and practices in effect in our diocese. I know that each one of you understands and respects the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by God our Creator. My prayer is that the Attorney General will agree that we all have met our commitments to safeguard the most vulnerable among us.

As Christ is beside me, before me, I pray for your forgiveness for the wrongdoing that you may have experienced at the hands of someone within the Church, whether bishop, priest, religious or lay. We ask those who have been harmed to take courage and come forward because we will listen.

Here are some current resources for reporting:

Victim Reporting (past abuse): <https://www.myfloridalegal.com/stopabuse>

DCF Hotline (for current abuse): 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

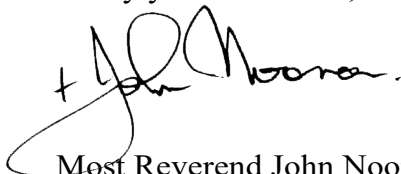
Victim Assistance Coordinator: Randy Means, 407-246-7179

During our 50th anniversary year of the Diocese of Orlando, we call upon the intercession of Mary, Mother of God, our patroness and example of God's mercy.

Mary, Mother of the Church,
We stand before you
shaken by the scandal and division
in the Church that we love.
We pray for victims of abuse,
whose trust was betrayed
and whose innocence was shattered
by members of the clergy.
We pray for those whose suffering was ignored
and for those who were silenced or disbelieved.
We pray for our Church leaders,
that by putting the needs of the vulnerable first,
by acting with transparency,
and by holding themselves
accountable to God and to the People of God
they may regain the trust that has been broken.
We pray for ourselves, that the darkness and confusion we feel
may give way to light.
May we find the way to justice, unity, healing, and hope,
through your Son, Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for us.
Mary, comfort of the troubled, pray for us.
Mary, Mother of Church, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Noonan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "N".

Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando