

President of U.S. Bishops' Conference Response to Pope Francis's *Letter to the People of God*

August 20, 2018

WASHINGTON—Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, President of the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) (USCCB), has issued the following statement in response to Pope Francis's *Letter to the People of God*, issued earlier today. In his letter addressed to the whole People of God, the Pope calls on the Church to join in acts of prayer and fasting in “combatting all forms of abuse of power, sexual abuse and the abuse of conscience.”

Cardinal DiNardo's full statement follows:

“I am grateful to the Holy Father for his *Letter to the People of God*, responding to the Pennsylvania Grand Jury investigation and other revelations that have surfaced. The very fact that he opens the letter with the words of Saint Paul: ‘If one part suffers, all parts suffer with it’ (1 Cor 12:25), shows that he is writing to all of us as a pastor, a pastor who knows how deeply sin destroys lives. I find these words of the Holy Father particularly helpful: ‘penance and prayer will help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people’s sufferings and to overcome the thirst for power and possessions that are so often the root of those evils.’ These words must provoke action – especially by the bishops. We bishops need to– and we must – practice with all humility such prayer and penance.

“The Holy Father is also inviting, and I am asking this as well, that all the faithful join in prayer and fasting as a way to help foster conversion and genuine change of life wherever it is needed, even in the shepherds of the Church. Jesus remarked once, ‘This kind can only come out through prayer and fasting’ (Mark 9:29); a humble reminder that such acts of faith can move mountains and can even bring about true healing and conversion.

“On behalf of my brother bishops, I offer that only by confronting our own failure in the face of crimes against those we are charged to protect can the Church resurrect a culture of life where the culture of death has prevailed.”