



Office of the Bishop

August 21, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once again, terrible allegations of sexual abuse have surfaced in the Church. Hearing these stories, saddens and upsets me, as I am sure it does you. *"If one member suffers, we all suffer."* (1 Cor 12.26)

This reinforces all the more, the need to be constantly vigilant and resolutely determined to follow our Safe Environment Policy and Procedures.

(<http://www.nelsondiocese.org/diocesan-information/catholic-pastoral-centre-offices/safe-environment.html>)

I renew my commitment to you to take all accusations seriously, to investigate and deal with them in the appropriate manner. Those hurt by the Church need to be heard, helped to heal and suitably compensated for their harm.

Let us continue to pray that the scourge of abuse will be eradicated from the Church and no child or vulnerable persons will ever be harmed again. I encourage you to set aside time to fast and pray as requested by our Holy Father Francis.

May Mary, Mother of the Church and St. Joseph, guide and protector of youth, intercede on our behalf for the good of all people.

Sincerely in Christ our Lord,

+ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson

Statement on the Recent Revelations of Sexual Abuse in the Church

VANCOUVER (August 17, 2018) – Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, today released a statement regarding the recent revelations of abuse in the Church.

To the faithful of the Archdiocese of Vancouver:

Over the past few weeks, a number of very serious accounts of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church have become public.

Like you, I am devastated by these accounts of profound evil.

What the victims of sexual abuse have endured has shaken me and broken my heart. I grieve for what they have suffered at the hands of their abusers and by those who betrayed their spiritual fatherhood by failing to protect those entrusted to their pastoral care.

In addition to being sexually abused, many victims were treated very poorly by authorities in the Church. The failure of Church leaders to prevent the abuse, covering it up by moving abusers around, their lack of care and concern for victims: these were grave failures and terribly wrong. We are all rightfully outraged and discouraged by these actions.

As a bishop, I am especially upset with those bishops and priests who failed to protect the most vulnerable among us. They did not live up to their calling as shepherds and, even more, as spiritual fathers. What father would come to know that his child had been abused and do nothing about it? What father would cover up the abuse and tell his child to “get over it” in order to protect the family’s “reputation”? Would that they had acted like Jesus, who showed his anger towards those who defiled the temple!

If you are aware of any situation of abuse happening now, please immediately contact law enforcement authorities. If the abuse involves a member of the clergy or any person engaged in ministry in our Archdiocese, please also make us aware. You may find our webpage on reporting abuse at: <https://rcav.org/safe-environment-reporting/>

If you know of any sexual abuse that occurred in the past, but have not reported it before, consider doing so now.

For a number of years now, the Archdiocese of Vancouver has had a robust abuse prevention policy in place. We report allegations of sexual abuse to law enforcement. We offer to pay for counselling for victims. We are looking at ways to offer other support as needed.

I call on the faithful of the Archdiocese of Vancouver to join me in doing penance in reparation for the grave sins committed within our Church against our brothers and sisters. In order to heal as a community of faith, we must first acknowledge our brokenness before the Lord.

Within the next few weeks, I will issue a pastoral letter outlining our plans, including prayer, fasting and services of reparation in all our parishes at a date to be determined. The pain inflicted on so many victims affects us all and compels each of us to offer our prayers for them and to do penance for the sins committed against them.

Most Reverend J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver
17 August 2018