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### **Bishop Daniel E. Thomas Denounces Moral Failures on the Part of Church Leaders**

Bishop Daniel E. Thomas echoes the statement of Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (statement below), and stands with his fellow bishops in their denouncing the recently revealed depraved moral failures of their own fellow bishops whose action, or inaction, has so wounded the vulnerable and betrayed the trust of the faithful.

According to Bishop Thomas, "We cannot tolerate any abuse within the Catholic Church, and the moral failures of Archbishop Theodore McCarrick bring home the need to be diligent in responding to accusations in a timely and just manner, no matter who is accused or when the abuse took place."

With its revised and strengthened *Policy for the Protection of Minors and Young People with Accompanying Standards of Behavior and Boundaries and Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults*, promulgated on May 1, 2018, The Diocese of Toledo renewed its commitment of zero tolerance to the sexual abuse of minors on the part of anyone who serves the church. "I invite all our priests, deacons, consecrated religious and lay faithful to commit ourselves to prayer, fasting and penance for the healing of victims of sexual abuse, for all those affected by such abuse and for our own conversion of heart, mind and soul which alone can, by the power of Christ Jesus, eradicate sin and renew the church," said Bishop Thomas.

Bishop Thomas continues, "In making my own the statement of Cardinal DiNardo, I also make my own the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: 'who is weak that I am not affected by it, who is scandalized that I am not aflame with indignation?' (2 Cor 11:29)."

#### **Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo's full statement follows**

(<http://www.usccb.org/news/2018/18-136.cfm>):

"The accusations against Archbishop Theodore McCarrick reveal a grievous moral failure within the Church. They cause bishops anger, sadness, and shame; I know they do in me.

They compel bishops to ask, as I do, what more could have been done to protect the People of God. Both the abuses themselves, and the fact that they have remained undisclosed for decades, have caused great harm to people's lives and represent grave moral failures of judgement on the part of Church leaders.

These failures raise serious questions. Why weren't these allegations of sins against chastity and human dignity disclosed when they were first brought to Church officials? Why wasn't this egregious situation addressed decades sooner and with justice? What must our seminaries do to protect the freedom to discern a priestly vocation without being subject to misuse of power?

Archbishop McCarrick will rightly face the judgement of a canonical process at the Holy See regarding the allegations against him, but there are also steps we should be taking as the Church here in the United States. Having prayed about this, I have convened the USCCB Executive Committee. This meeting was the first of many among bishops that will extend into our Administrative Committee meeting in September and our General Assembly in November. All of these discussions will be oriented toward discerning the right course of action for the USCCB. This work will take some time but allow me to stress these four points immediately.

First, I encourage my brother bishops as they stand ready in our local dioceses to respond with compassion and justice to anyone who has been sexually abused or harassed by anyone in the Church. We should do whatever we can to accompany them.

Second, I would urge anyone who has experienced sexual assault or harassment by anyone in the Church to come forward. Where the incident may rise to the level of a crime, please also contact local law enforcement.

Third, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will pursue the many questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick's conduct to the full extent of its authority; and where that authority finds its limits, the Conference will advocate with those who do have the authority. One way or the other, we are determined to find the truth in this matter.

Finally, we bishops recognize that a spiritual conversion is needed as we seek to restore the right relationship among us and with the Lord. Our Church is suffering from a crisis of sexual morality. The way forward must involve learning from past sins.

Let us pray for God's wisdom and strength for renewal as we follow St. Paul's instruction: 'Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect' (Romans 12:2)."

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*The Diocese of Toledo, established April 15, 1910, encompasses 8,222 square miles in a mixture of urban and rural areas and spans 19 counties across Northwest Ohio, serving approximately 320,000 Catholics in 123 parishes. The Diocese includes Allen, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Henry, Huron, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood and Wyandot counties.*

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