



## DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

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Office of the Bishop

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August 17, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am saddened and disturbed by recent news reports about priests and bishops in our country who have harmed so many victims and betrayed our trust through sinful acts and omissions. It is tragic, and I ask for forgiveness on behalf of my brother bishops and priests. This news strengthens my resolve to ensure that no child or vulnerable adult is ever abused.

I want to assure you that safeguards are in place here in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. We require background checks on everyone, including priests, deacons and seminarians, who minister to minors and vulnerable adults. On our website, you will find all of our safe environment policies, as well as the names of priests of the Diocese of St. Petersburg who have been credibly accused of abusing minors.

We consistently urge anyone who has been a victim of abuse or is aware of abuse, to call law enforcement and our victim assistance coordinator at 866-407-4505. This information is also available on the diocesan website.

With all the strides that have been made, we can do more, and we will do more. A national effort is underway to engage laity, experts and the Vatican to determine what changes are needed to improve our protections. I pledge to be accountable to you and to continue to enforce our policies, which includes informing our community when an abuse has occurred and removing the abuser from all ministry.

Please join me in praying for victims whose lives have been wounded by abuse. I pray for each of you that your faith in Jesus Christ will never waver. Let us also pray for our Church and its leaders. May we learn from past mistakes so that we can better safeguard the people we serve.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Gregory Parkes  
Bishop of St. Petersburg