

The Women of the New Testament Ministry  
St. Ignatius Catholic Community  
740 N. Calvert Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington, DC 20017

October 16, 2018

Dear Cardinal DiNardo,

We are heartened by the three goals you announced in your 16 August statement on the measures to be taken by the USCCB and the Holy See to address the moral catastrophe that has overtaken the Church:

- A full investigation of questions surrounding Cardinal McCarrick that includes an Apostolic Visitation and the National Review Board.
- A clear and publicized procedure to report abuse and misconduct by bishops.
- Canonical procedures to resolve complaints against bishops that are prompt, fair, and transparent.

We believe that further efforts are necessary to regain the trust of the laity in our bishops. We need a published review, by an independent and professionally competent body of laity, of *all* recorded allegations of abuse or cover-up by bishops. This review will explain what was done well and what was in error. It will lay out remedies for the harm done and what will be done to prevent further harm.

Further, we agree with Pope Francis that a closed clerical culture has contributed to the thousands of cases of sexual abuse and conspiracy to cover them up that continue to come to light. The pope has asked us “to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of them being covered up and perpetuated.”

We need to see our Conference of Bishops assume responsibility in acting as a body and in petitioning the Holy See as necessary to address the issue of clericalism. Specifically:

- Screen seminary candidates and their promotion to Orders by including the deliberative participation of competent lay women and men.
- Establish formation programs that form servant-disciples, are coeducational, and prepare candidates for collaborative ministry, lay and ordained.
- Implement changes that are not doctrinal: marriage permitted for priests as well as deacons; Cardinal Electors among whom are lay men and women; the rejection of a false “complementarity between the sexes” metaphysics that links governance exclusively with men and ordination; the elimination of honorary titles and the trappings of monarchy; and the creation of financial oversight and transparency.
- Inaugurate a scholarly review of the possibility of women deacons and a thorough study of the reasons given to exclude the ordination of women, with a set date for its publication.
- Remove canonical sanctions that forbid the study and discussion, among clergy and laity, of contested matters.
- Include qualified lay and religious women and men as full, voting participants in synods and other deliberative and consultative bodies within the Church.

We will be keeping vigil during the General Assembly of the USCCB being held in Baltimore November 12-14, in the expectation that specific actions will be announced.

Respectfully,

Members of the **Women of the New Testament** ministry at St. Ignatius Catholic Community in Baltimore, along with fellow community members:

(Printed name)

(Signature)