



St. Vincent de Paul Church

120 North Front Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

410.962.5078

stvchurch.org

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President, USCCB
Archbishop William Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore
Bishop Denis Madden, Urban Vicar, Archdiocese of Baltimore

November 8, 2018

Dear Brothers in Christ,

The parish community of St. Vincent de Paul is called to reach out to you in support of what God seeks to bring forth from the USCCB meeting in our city. You previously received a packet from us, including copies of initial heartfelt responses (written by over 100 of our parishioners) to the current crisis. We also invited parishioners to write personal letters to Cardinal DiNardo; many have done this.

In the midst of our own sadness, anger, and distress, we are aware that these recent developments in the life of our Church also deeply affect every bishop who longs for a Church that is a faithful follower of Jesus. We are all being invited to explore more deeply the ongoing call of the Gospel to understand the signs of the times, and to respond humbly and with courage.

We commend and support the bishops for addressing, at the November assembly, their own accountability through:

- Standards of Episcopal conduct (including the handling of allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct by others);
- The establishment of a special Lay Commission to pursue both allegations of sexual abuse against bishops, and their handling of such cases;
- Setting in place protocols for bishops removed or resigned from office due to abuse allegations or to their mishandling of such cases.

As a sign of solidarity — as you seek to be responsive to the People of God, and to God's Spirit creatively at work among us — our parish community has committed to being present with all of you during your Monday day of prayer through our own prayer.

We have two requests for the consideration of the assembly of bishops.

1. We request the establishment of annual diocesan and national synods. These synods (inspired by Pope Francis' re-enlivening of the synodal process) ought to include all of the diverse membership of the Church as active participants. They will then allow for meaningful, extended dialogue among lay and ordained people around the needs, struggles, and joys of the Church. It is time for transformative change that recognizes the unique, equally important roles in decision-making by all who are the Body of Christ: priests, religious, laypeople, and bishops.
2. We request that, until diocesan and national synods can be established, the two annual national gatherings of the bishops shall include significant lay involvement, and also decision-making capacity by the laity.

Jesus' command to love after the manner of his own radical love seems to us to involve hearing one another's voices. We hope this fall meeting of the bishops will lead to the maturing of the ways we listen to one another, so the power of love can deepen among us. Together, we can foster our spiritual growth, and work to bring justice into our world.

Perhaps it is time to consider more deeply St. Paul's recognition of the Church, as a living body. The present crisis is a symptom of our not fully understanding how all the parts are meant to work in harmony with one another. This lack of understanding can only lead to this Body of Christ not being able to live its life well. It may be time for us — lay person, bishop, priest, deacon, and religious — to re-examine our place in this body.

Grateful for the live streaming of the general assembly, our parish is committed to watching every session. After carefully listening to your dialogue, we will share our perspectives with you. In this (albeit limited) way, we will contribute to an integrated participation of the laity.

Thank you for your serious consideration of our requests. We assure you of our prayers at this difficult time, which may yet present an immensely hopeful opportunity for all of us. May God bring to fulfillment what God has begun in us!

For the Parish of St. Vincent de Paul,



Amber Hendricks
Parish Council Vice President



Michael Jacko
Parish Council President



Colleen McCahill
Pastoral Associate



Fr. Ray Chase
Pastor