

The Most Reverend Christophe Pierre
Apostolic Nuncio to the United States
3339 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008

November 4, 2018

Your Excellency:

We the People of God of the Archdiocese of Washington, inspired by the deep commitments of our Most Holy Father, Pope Francis, to listen to and empower the laity, humbly ask that as his delegate you listen to us. We seek three simple things that only the Pope has the authority in our Church to provide.

First, we seek the truth about the failure of the Holy See that enabled Archbishop Theodore McCarrick to become our Archbishop in 2001 and to remain here in apparent good standing until this year despite his alleged sexual misconduct with seminarians and priests. Only the authority of the Pope can empower a thorough investigation of this failure by providing access to all relevant Church files and personnel, including abrogation of the pontifical secret where appropriate. We fully support the archival investigation announced by Pope Francis on October 6th as well as the lay-assisted investigation outlined by Cardinal DiNardo on August 16th. Until we know the complete truth about this failure, we remain vulnerable to future failures.

Second, we seek accountability for those culpable for the McCarrick failure. Again only the Pope's authority can impose appropriate canonical penalties on the bishops, priests, and other Church personnel in both the United States and the Vatican who are deemed culpable. Until there is also accountability for this failure, we remain vulnerable.

Third, we seek transparency in the appointment of a new Archbishop of Washington and future bishops everywhere. We seek only to strengthen and not to replace the existing process of appointment by the Holy Father, perhaps by adding an independent lay review of candidates' personnel files before nominations are submitted to the Holy See. Until there is greater transparency in appointing bishops, we remain vulnerable.

Finally, Your Excellency, the McCarrick failure has become part of a broader political debate perceived by many as an attempt to undermine Pope Francis. We completely dissociate ourselves from this broader debate. We seek only three simple things in good faith – truth, accountability, and transparency – for justice and healing in our relationship with the Holy See.

With profound respect and assurance of my prayers, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Cc: Cardinal DiNardo, USCCB President