

October 3, 2020

Most Reverend Timothy L. Doherty
Bishop of Lafayette IN
Chairman, USCCB Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People
610 Lingle Ave.
Lafayette IN 47901

Dear Bishop Doherty,

On January 14, 2020, a complaint was filed with the Chairman of the National Review Board, Dr. Francesco Cesareo, concerning blatant violations of Article 3 of the Dallas Charter. Nearly nine months later the matter is unresolved. As the Dallas Charter is the basis of current policies for the protection of children, teens and vulnerable adults, this must be addressed as soon as possible.

The COVID-19 crisis has slowed down progress on many things; however, it is time to resolve this issue and answer questions about how 18 years of compliance audits have failed to report these violations to the USCCB. I am enclosing the original complaint, the memorandum by canon lawyer Thomas P. Doyle, the Diocese of Knoxville press release on the case of Michael Boyd, and the response by National Review Board Chairman Dr. Francesco C. Cesareo dated March 4, 2020.

Chairman Cesareo indicated that he was referring this to you. I have heard nothing from you since his letter of March 2020. I am requesting a response from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops through your office, through the office of the President of the USCCB Archbishop Jose H. Gomez and through the office of General Secretary Reverend Monsignor J. Brian Bransfield.

If the American bishops and the USCCB cannot undertake a satisfactory investigation of this complaint, I will be filing a *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* complaint against all named bishops/archbishops in the original complaint plus all officials of the USCCB under whose purview this issue falls.

All three dioceses of Tennessee are guilty of these violations of Article 3, but this is by no means restricted to Tennessee. We are waiting to see if there is transparency and rapid action to acknowledge publicly the many transgressions of Article 3 of the Dallas Charter. It will not be enough to say that going forward the dioceses/eparchies must be compliant. Thousands of victims have been silenced by deliberate NDAs and other silencing mechanisms in settlements both public and private, all with church officials and their lawyers cognizant that this is wrong. The case of Michael Boyd in the diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee, is a case in point of the blatant, unabashed silencing of a victim by the bishop and the diocese. Will the USCCB allow this to stand for Mr. Boyd and countless other victims across the United States?

Steps to resolve violations of Article 3 of the Dallas Charter should begin with the following:

1. Public acknowledgement by the USCCB that the annual diocesan compliance audits have failed to address adherence to Article 3 of the Dallas Charter. What else have they hidden?
2. Immediate revamping by the USCCB of the audit instrument to correct the negligence that has permitted these violations while admitting a history of 18 years of flawed audits from many dioceses/epiarchies.

3. Directive by the USCCB that all dioceses/eparchies report every violation of Article 3 of the Dallas Charter since its promulgation in 2002. Public declaration by the USCCB that any and all clauses either verbal or written which silence a victim and/or a victim's family in any way are hereby null and void, not only going forward but also retroactive to 2002 and, in a spirit of reparation, before 2002 as well. This would include all non-disclosure agreements, non-disparaging agreements, or any other silencing mechanism not specifically requested by the victim per the terms of Article 3 of the Dallas Charter. This refers to settlements, agreements or any such phraseology which effectively silences a victim or a victim's family whether entered into with a diocese/eparchy, religious entity or individual abuser.
4. Public apology by the USCCB to both victims, the Catholic faithful, and the general public for failure of adherence to the Dallas Charter, its bedrock document for the protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults, and a pledge to examine other areas of the Charter which may have also been violated by dioceses/eparchies and religious entities under the jurisdiction of the USCCB.

The silencing of victims is the premiere tool of manipulation and abuse used by all sexual predators including predator clergy. The gross negligence of oversight by the USCCB has revictimized those already molested by clergy. From 2002 to the present, you pledged in the Dallas Charter Article 3 not to silence victims. You have failed. The failure must be rectified if you are to have any credibility going forward.

Steps must be taken immediately and decisively as outlined above to reverse the malevolence so far allowed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The harm to the healing of victims cannot be calculated. We are encouraging all to look carefully at the Dallas Charter of 2002 to identify other transgressions against victims who are already beaten down by the abuse of a criminal clergy and a criminally-complicit Catholic hierarchy.

Sincerely,

Susan Vance
SNAP of Tennessee
8324 Burchfield Drive
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Enclosures: Letter to Francesco Cesareo, Chairman of the National Review Board (1), Statement by Canon Lawyer Thomas P. Doyle (2), Press release from the Diocese of Knoxville on the Michael Boyd case (3), Letter from National Review Board Chairman Francesco Cesareo (4)

.cc: Luis Cardinal Ladaria Ferrer, S.J., Prefect, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Piazza della stessa Congregazione 00120, Citta del Vaticano, Italy

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio, Apostolic Nunciature, 3339 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington DC 20008

Dr, Francesco C. Cesareo, Chairman of the National Review Board, 3211 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, DC 30017

Archbishop José H. Gómez, President of the USCCB, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 3424 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90010-2241

Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron, Vice-President of the USCCB, 211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio, Secretary of the USCCB, 211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Most Reverend Gregory L. Parkes, Treasurer of the USCCB, 211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Reverend Monsignor J. Brian Bransfield, STD, General Secretary of the USCCB, 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Reverend Monsignor Jeffrey D. Burrill, STL, Associate General Secretary of the USCCB, 211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Theresa Ridderhoff, M. Ed., Associate General Secretary of the USCCB, 211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Anthony R. Picarello, Jr., Esq., Associate General Secretary of the USCCB, 211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Metropolitan See of Louisville, Kentucky, 3940 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY, 40213-1463

Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr., Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, 20 West 9th St., Suite 200, Kansas City, MO 64105

Bishop Richard F. Stika, Bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville, The Chancery, 805 Northshore Dr. S.W., Knoxville, TN 37919

Bishop J. Mark Spalding, Bishop of the Diocese of Nashville, 2800 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214

Bishop David P. Talley, Bishop of the Diocese of Memphis, 5825 Shelby Oaks Drive, Memphis, TN 38184

Zach Hiner, Executive Director, SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests), PO Box 56539 Saint Louis MO 63156