



## ***On the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great sadness and anger that I have received the latest news about what is going on in Pennsylvania. I know that we all share in the pain of our Church for what is being revealed at this time.

The Grand Jury findings in Pennsylvania have concluded that there were over a thousand cases of abuse of minors by over three hundred priests over many years. The evidence being revealed is outrageous, graphic, and tragic, and compounds the abuse about which we have known and addressed in the past. The conclusion of the Grand Jury is that Catholic Bishops, Priests and others were responsible for covering up the atrocities.

We were all stunned by the earlier revelations about former Cardinal McCarrick; as well as the silence of Bishops, Priests, and others in high positions of Church leadership who knew of his condition and activities.

I am heartbroken to know that our leadership has allowed this violation of trust and caused grave damage to the lives, health and faith of God's people and most especially the harm done to the children and the vulnerable.

I agree with all those who call for justice. Justice requires that all of those who knew of these crimes and misconduct be held accountable, morally and legally, for their actions or lack thereof.

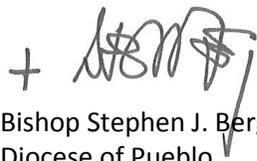
We have acted vigorously in this Diocese to set in place training, structures, and vigilant supervision so that such abuse does not happen here. I pledge to give my best and utmost efforts to a safe environment in parishes, schools and communities. It is incumbent on all of us now to renew this firm pledge and follow through with vigilance for the safety of the little ones among us, in the Safe Environment programs we have implemented.

How painful this is to address today on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary, our Mother. Her Assumption into heaven was accomplished precisely by God that we would see an unblemished Mother, assumed into heaven body and soul, uncorrupted, as the model of our Church. She is with us now at the foot of the cross on our own modern day Calvary. Be assured that she is with us today, with the victims of yesterday, and with the Church of tomorrow. May she always bring hope for us through these difficult times as we seek to weather this awful storm.

As a small, yet powerful gesture of our solidarity with the victims and as a sign of how seriously we are taking our responsibility in safeguarding minors and bringing healing to the wounded, as your Shepherd I am requiring every Catholic parish in Southern Colorado to begin immediately designating one Mass intention every month as such: "For the intentions of the victims of clergy child abuse, and in reparation for the crimes of the perpetrators."

We are so sorry this has happened. I wish to thank all of you who have worked so hard over years to ensure that abuse of children by Church ministers in our Diocese will never again be tolerated. We pray for the victims and we pray for our Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Bishop Stephen J. Berg  
Diocese of Pueblo