

Notes from Diocesan Listening Session
Incarnation Delegation
October 18, 2018

- 1) Share one word that best describes how you are feeling in light of the abuse crisis.
 - Rage Disgust Betrayal Darkness Shame Angry
Lost Hopeless
 - Optimistic (this is an opportunity to point ourselves in the right direction)
 - Goodbye (I want to say goodbye to anyone who knew what happened. They shouldn't be here, and either they have to leave, or I will)
 - Not "restless" hearts, but "shattered" or "destroyed" hearts

- 2) What is hardest for you to grapple with during this time?
 - Loss of moral authority from the bishops
 - We're being asked to think about what We want to do while we still feel incredible grief. I'm being asked for direction, but still figuring out if this is a faith where I want to raise my child
 - Trust destroyed in priests
 - Hard that bishops still think they should (or can) be a part of the solution... they've had their chance
 - Realization that this is a culture of church to cover up and hide... it's not a mistake if it happens for decades
 - Failure of leadership (unable to self-regulate)
 - Number of alleged abuses, and the number we don't know about

- 3) What has been the reaction of people in your life in light of the abuse crisis?
 - So many people ask "Why are you (still) Catholic?" Or "Why are you staying?"
 - Someone said "This is why I left the church"
 - Anger
 - What about the children? We don't hear about the victims... It's become too politicized

- 4) What has been the reaction of your parishioners?
 - Tumult... No consistent feeling. VERY diverse reactions
 - Obviously anger... people are breaking the law, and yet allowed to stay
 - This brings faith into question for many
 - Support for good priests
 - Need for vigilance
 - We had a forum (in both English and Spanish), and we shared notes with the diocese

- 5) What are the unresolved questions you have about the crisis?
 - All questions are unresolved!!
 - Breadth and scope of abuse in this diocese? I'd like a grand jury in Virginia
 - How deep is the problem here?

- Why don't we (parishioners) know the last time there was an allegation? And when the incident happened? And what's been done about it? I need to know as a parent!
- There's been lots of discussion that change comes from the laity. What does that mean/ look like? (It might not be helpful for the bishop to answer this one)
- How are these listening sessions going to be answered? What happens after today?
- How will this be different than in 2002?

6) What can the Bishop do to best lead the Diocese (both clergy and the lay faithful) in this current environment?

- Call for independent grand jury investigation and offer resources
- Full cooperation with civil authorities with both new and old allegations
- Advocate to open statute of limitations
- Advocate to abolish non-disclosure agreements, especially in criminal cases
- Reveal what has happened; **Repent** for past steps; Reconcile with those hurt, Report cases to civil authorities; Those who can't get on board should Retire or Resign
- We don't want to be surprised by the press giving us updates... we want transparency
- Regular meetings with abuse victims

7) How can we best move forward to continue the spread of the Gospel?

- PRAY!
- Hold people accountable!
- Regular reporting of diocese to laity to energize them
- Listen (or continue listening) on an ongoing basis
- We must be vigilant
- WE aren't the ones having trouble spreading the Gospel... it's the "tainted" church
- To spread the Gospel, we must live our faith, serve others on the ground level... don't depend on the hierarchy
- Maybe we can't evangelize until this is fixed; we aren't credible
- Our actions (the works of mercy) are the only thing we do that's credible.