

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.