



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

May 20, 2019

The Diocese of Grand Rapids' Office of Communications shares the following reflection from Bishop Walkowiak regarding [Vos estis lux mundi](#) ("You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" Mt 5:14). The new *Motu Proprio* released by Pope Francis orders a worldwide response by the Church to the evil of sexual abuse:

"I join my brother bishops in welcoming the directives of *Vos estis lux mundi* as a framework for empowering the global Church in responding to and reporting abuse. Especially important are its directives for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against cardinals, bishops, patriarchs, and heads of religious institutes, and holding accountable anyone who covers-up or fails to adequately respond to allegations of abuse. In addition, it requires reporting to and compliance with local law enforcement, establishes whistle-blower protections for those who come forward, and protects the rights of all persons involved.

The release of this *Motu Proprio* just two months after the meeting of episcopal conference presidents in Rome, shows the Holy Father's expectation for swift and far-reaching action to eliminate the crime and sin of sexual abuse from the Church. It also reflects his deep pastoral concern for victim-survivors, their families and the faithful throughout the world.

Many elements of the *Motu Proprio* are already being followed in the United States through the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#) and its essential norms, established in 2002. As an expansion of that work, the Diocese of Grand Rapids and other U.S. dioceses stand ready to take steps to implement *Vos estis lux mundi*, following the U.S. bishops' general assembly this June.

We will continue to care for and support every victim-survivor who courageously comes forward. Through prayer, vigilance and the action of the Holy Spirit, let us continue to work together toward healing and holiness for our Church."

Individuals with knowledge of sexual abuse by clergy or another representative of the Church are urged to contact local law enforcement and the Michigan Attorney General's office which can be reached at 844-324-3374. Individuals may also contact the diocese's victim assistance coordinator at 616-243-0491. For additional information, visit grdiocese.org and click "Protecting God's Children."

Contact:

JoAnn Fox, senior communications specialist

Phone: 616-514-6067

Email: jfox@grdiocese.org