

**Statement from Bishop Myron J. Cotta**  
**Diocese of Stockton**

The devastating news of the revelations of sexual abuse over the past 70 years in regard to several Dioceses in Pennsylvania has had a gut wrenching impact on all of us. As a member of the clergy, and as your Bishop, I have experienced a variety of emotions this week: anger, outrage, shame, disheartening frustration – enough is enough! The devastation of those lives of the survivor victims is beyond one’s imagination. The diabolical behavior of ordained ministers upon the innocent is an abomination.

The Church and its ministers must be held to a higher standard. We are called to protect children and youth. We are called to keep them safe. There is no excuse for what has happened.

In our Diocese, we faithfully work to be proactive and accountable in reporting all allegations of sexual child abuse and sexual misconduct. We continue to uphold the promotion and monitoring of our safe environment training programs and protocol. Not only do we have the assistance of a group of laity who serve on our Diocesan Review Board, but we also assign a Safe Environment Coordinator to each parish and location to assure that the safe environment protocol is being upheld. Our Diocese remains committed to protecting God’s children and vulnerable adults.

This suffering and turmoil that many now have to face is related to the lack of desire to grow in holiness and lack of accountability of church leadership. As your Bishop, you are entrusted to my pastoral care, and I assure you that I will accept my responsibility to address any matters that knowingly put the children, the young people, and the vulnerable of this Diocese at risk.

If you have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse or harassment, I urge you to come forward and report it to the proper authorities. This could mean notifying police, Child Protective Services, your employer, your pastor or a trusted member of your family.

Let us not forget, we are a people of hope. I encourage you to continue your good works. We must work through this together and continue to accompany and care for the needs of the people we serve.

I ask you to pray for the victims and their families. Let us remember in our prayers all the suffering experienced by the innocent; let us pray for their healing and recovery. I also ask for your prayers for me and for all priests who have been faithful in their ministry. We, too, grieve with our brothers and sisters who have been hurt and broken by this grave sin that has victimized so many.

“For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

Our Lady, Mother of the Church, pray for us!