



# Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Office of Communications

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Deborah Cox  
Director of Communications  
[dcox@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:dcox@richmonddiocese.org)  
(804) 359-5661 Office  
(804) 971-7412 Mobile

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## **Bishop Barry C. Knestout's Invitation to Pray for All Victims of Abuse at Mass of Atonement**

I am profoundly aware of the hurt and anger the Catholic faithful and the community at large are feeling in light of the recent report of abuse by Church leadership and now with the release of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report on abuse in the Church. Those revelations further erode trust in Church leaders and in the Church as a whole. I am praying for all who have been abused.

Our Church — especially its bishops — must continually seek forgiveness for our failures from those who have suffered as a result of those failures.

To open ourselves to the grace we need to overcome this scourge upon our Church, we must prayerfully seek healing and reconciliation with all who have been hurt. As a step in this process, I am inviting the faithful to come and pray with me for all victims of abuse at a Mass of Atonement, Friday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m., at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond.

We will pray for all victims of abuse, express sorrow for the failure of Church leaders, seek forgiveness for our sins, and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing healing of the People of God.

During the seven months I have been bishop, I have asked for a review of the process and procedures currently in place for reporting and responding to all abuse. I am encouraged by the work of our Diocesan Review Board, a committee of lay and clergy members who have assisted our diocese for the last 16 years, in assessing accusations of child abuse and the suitability for ministry of the accused.

I am firmly committed, as Bishop of the Richmond Diocese, to addressing accusations of abuse quickly and transparently. Be assured, we will continue to make protection of the most vulnerable a priority in our parishes, schools and throughout our diocese.

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The Diocese of Richmond covers over 33,000 square miles and serves more than 220,000 Catholics.

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