



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



Statement by Bishop Michael F. Olson
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth
Regarding

Pope Francis's *Motu Proprio* Ordering Worldwide Response to the Evil of Sexual Abuse

May 9, 2019

As Pope Francis exhorts each of us, there is an urgent need for a “continuous and profound conversion of hearts” to remove the scourge of sexual abuse from the Church, from our families, from our institutions of education and even from the halls of government. Prayer is essential for the conversion of hearts among all people to grow in respect for God’s gift of sexuality designed for the reciprocal love of a man and a woman appropriate to marriage.

Pope Francis’ *Motu Proprio* “*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*”, promulgated today, clearly mandates a response to the worldwide evil of sexual abuse. The document is unmistakably intended to hold clerics and their superiors responsible for taking affirmative action to protect the youth and the vulnerable and to foster the healing of victims.

Through “*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*”, the Church makes every individual, regardless of status, accountable for their actions if they perpetrate sexual abuse against a minor, against a vulnerable individual, or if an individual fails to report such abuse.

By requiring every diocese in the world to implement this new law, Pope Francis underscores that timely reporting of incidents of sexual predation perpetrated by clerics is essential to eradicate the evil of sexual abuse. The Pope rightly further directs that a superior who fails to take prompt actions in reporting such abuse to appropriate ecclesial and criminal authorities is also to be held accountable.

I am grateful the Holy See has offered us the required guidance to reinforce what has been our practice and policy within the Diocese of Fort Worth for some time. I look forward to working with my brother bishops in the USCCB to develop national norms and to further improve our diocesan practices and policies in keeping with the integrity of the Gospel and respect for human dignity.

I ask that all join me in praying for the continued healing of those who have been harmed by sexual abuse.