

Statement of Bishop Joseph Phuong Nguyen on Sexual Abuse in Pennsylvania, US.

To the faithful of the Diocese of Kamloops,

The report made public in Pennsylvania this week has shaken us as members of the Church. There are two words that can express our feelings with these horrible crimes: shame and sorrow. The pain that inflicted on vulnerable young people is a crime and a sin. Such conduct of clergy totally contradicts the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and seriously breaches trust between minister and people. As a bishop, I am deeply sorry for the hurt caused by the clergy.

In communion with Pope Francis and Bishops of Canada, I want victims to know that the Church is on their side. I also want to assure all the members of the Diocese of Kamloops that we will not tolerate any form of abuse by our clergy, employees, or volunteers. Our Diocese is committed to ensuring that all of our parishes and schools offer safe environment for the people we serve. Furthermore, comprehensive steps are being taken to make certain that those being ordained for our Diocese are men of personal integrity and that they will serve the Church as trustworthy ministers after the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The application and screening process for those entering our seminaries is thorough and comprehensive. It includes psychological testing, as well as an in depth interview process. The background screening includes the government fingerprinting process. Throughout the formation process, regular programs are given dealing with human growth and development, human sexuality, and how to maintain appropriate boundaries in ministerial relationships. Many aspects are taken into consideration before anyone is proposed for ordination.

All clergy, employees, and volunteers are now subject to a formal screening procedure, including police information checks and they are required to take formal training in abuse awareness and prevention.

The pain inflicted on many victims and the shame that has affected the Church compel all of us to offer our constant prayers for the victims and also for the wound of our mother Church.

May our sorrowful mother Mary who stands faithfully by her Son, Jesus Christ on his cross ever guide us on our journey as her Son's disciples and co-workers in his vineyard.

Most Reverend Joseph Phuong Nguyen
Bishop of Kamloops