



## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Council #12173

St. Michael the Archangel

Patron of Police

## FROM OUR CARDINAL:



*His Eminence*

**Blase Cardinal Cupich**

*Archbishop of Chicago*

**TOPIC: The Bishops in Baltimore**

November 20, 2018

“The big news at the annual fall meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was the Holy See’s decision that we delay adopting new policies for the disciplining of bishops accused of misconduct and the mishandling of cases involving abuse of minors by clergy. The president of our conference informed the body of bishops of this on the morning of Nov. 12; I was given advance notice just before the meeting by Cardinal DiNardo, president of the USCCB.

“It is not clear whether the Holy See had specific concerns with the proposals being presented. We were told that we should wait until the meeting in February when the Holy Father is gathering all the presidents of the bishops’ conferences to address child protection, so that our decisions can be informed by listening to our brother bishops from around the world.

“While the request that we delay was disappointing, given the work done in preparation for our meeting, I rose to encourage a pathway forward. As I remarked, there was no reason why the body of bishops could not take up the discussion as scheduled, fine tune the documents and then take a resolution ballot to make clear to our people where we stand, but also to give the president of our conference a clear indication of the mind of the bishops in the United States as he prepares to participate in the February meeting.

“My final suggestion was that we should meet again in March, or shortly after the February meeting in Rome, to take up our proposals, informed by the input of other bishops’ conferences from around the world, and then adopt new policies that build on the progress we have made since 2002. That progress is substantial and includes full background checks on employees and volunteers, safe-environment training for adults and children, procedures for mandatory reporting to civil authorities, cooperating with law enforcement, transparency in communicating with parishioners and outreach through a victims-assistance team.

“What was missing in our procedures were clear provisions for disciplining bishops who mishandle cases or abuse minors. That is the work we now will need to complete after the February meeting in Rome.

“To my mind, in taking this unprecedented action of calling the presidents of the world’s bishops conferences to Rome, the Holy Father is making clear that he recognizes the urgency of this issue and that this is a watershed moment in the life of the church. Time and again, he has shown his resolve to comprehensively address this scourge, by removing bishops who mishandle cases of the abuse of minors and by disciplining cardinals and bishops for misconduct, to the point of laicizing some.

“Pope Francis is calling for radical reform in the life of the church, for he understands that this crisis is about the abuse of power and a culture of protection and privilege, which have created a climate of secrecy, without accountability for misdeeds. All of that has to end, not only in terms of how it risks the safety of children, but also how the abuse of power by certain leaders undermines the Gospel and injures the faith lives of the people the ordained have been sent to serve.

“The meeting in February also demonstrates that Pope Francis does not believe that the abuse of minors by clergy is strictly an American or Western problem, but rather he knows that it is a global one for the church.

“We bishops will have time to prayerfully consider our next steps in January, when we will gather for a retreat at Chicago’s own seminary in Mundelein. The Holy Father has chosen the Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa to lead the retreat. He has served as papal preacher of the papal household since 1980, when St. Pope John Paul II appointed him.

“I very much need your prayers and ask you to pray for the bishops as they prepare to take action in the weeks and months ahead. I am convinced we will get this right, but only with God’s help and the involvement of all in the church, especially laypeople. That is my prayer. Please make it your own.”