December 22, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I extend to you and your families my deep sorrow and apology for the abuse you have endured and respectfully ask your forgiveness for the betrayal of trust at the deepest level by those who were meant to protect you. I particularly express my sorrow to those who have been abused by priests, deacons, consecrated men and women religious, volunteers and lay employees of the church. I have a sincere personal commitment to address the spiritual and emotional well-being of victims and survivors of sexual abuse.

It is our sacred duty in the Church and in the Diocese of Arlington to protect all people, especially our youth, and I take this responsibility very seriously. The Charter the Protection of Children and Young People was established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002. The Charter provides a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse.

As your Bishop I am committed to you and your healing and will seek to help you in every way possible in binding up your wounds by providing assistance through the Victim’s Assistance Office. It is important to me to sustain a healing environment for you and your families that allows for the renewal of hope and opportunities for reconciliation. I am available to listen to you and your experiences and to engage in any dialogue that may be helpful to you.

Please explore this website and use it as a possible resource for your healing. Also, contact the Victim’s Assistance coordinators, Pat Mudd, Rosa Colello and Aneliz Sipe who have the training and experience to meet you and patiently explore with you your needs. It is my hope and prayer that you find solace and support in this Victim’s Assistance program, and by the prayers and Masses that will be offered for you.

May Almighty God bless you and give you peace and consolation.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington