

Message to Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse from Bishop Burbidge

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With deep sorrow, I apologize to you and your families for the abuse you have endured and respectfully ask your forgiveness for the betrayal of trust by those who were meant to protect you. In a particular way, I grieve with those who have been abused by priests, deacons, consecrated men, women religious, volunteers, and lay employees of the church.

I renew my commitment to accompany pastorally victims and survivors of sexual abuse for the well-being of their spiritual and emotional healing in Christ. It is my hope and prayer that you find solace and support in this Victim Assistance program and by the prayers and Masses that will be offered for you.

Prayer for the Abused

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by the blood of his cross.
Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed
in them.

Hear the cries of our brothers and
sisters who have been gravely harmed,
and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,
steady their shaken spirits with faith.
Grant them justice for their cause,
enlightened by your truth.
Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform brokenness into wholeness.
Grant us the courage and wisdom,
humility and grace, to act with justice.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may
find peace in justice.
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.

Amen



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARLINGTON

Office of Victim Assistance

*Hope & Healing for
Victims/Survivors of Abuse*

*"Fear not, for I am with you... I will
strengthen you, and help you, and
uphold you..."*

Isaiah 4:10

Our Mission & Services

The Office of Victim Assistance seeks to extend the loving compassion of Christ to victims/survivors of child sexual abuse throughout their healing process. We offer a range of services to address unique, individual needs, including:

- Help making a report to the proper authorities
- Referrals for spiritual guidance or direction
- Referrals for therapy or counseling
- Monthly Sharing groups: A safe and supportive environment for victims to share their experiences and connect with others.
- Masses for healing and prayer services: Special liturgies and prayers for victims/survivors and their families.
- Educational presentations: Workshops and presentations on topics related to abuse and healing.
- Annual retreat: A Saturday retreat for victims/survivors to focus on healing, emotional support, and opportunities for growth.
- Listening sessions with Bishop Burbidge: An opportunity to victims/survivors to meet with the bishop and share their experiences.

Our Office & Contact Info

The Office of Victim Assistance desires to accompany victims/survivors on their healing journey. We understand that reaching out for support may be difficult and we are here to help guide victims/survivors through this process. If you are, or someone you know is, a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse by clergy, an employee, or a volunteer of the Diocese of Arlington, please do not be afraid; we welcome you to contact our office to speak to our staff about how we may help. Telephone calls are confidential. All crimes are reported to proper authorities.

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Confidential Phone Number
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Please visit our Diocesan Webpage for more
information and resources:
<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/victim-assistance/>

Future & Hope

In 2003, under the leadership of Bishop Emeritus Loverde, the office of Victim Assistance was established to respond to needs of victims/survivors of the Diocese of Arlington. These efforts continue under Bishop Burbidge.

On behalf of the Diocese of Arlington, we apologize for the pain you have endured. Please know you are not alone. The abuse you suffered was not your fault and we are here for you.

A Testimony from a Survivor

The support group and the Victim Assistance office have helped me tremendously. Initially hesitant, I now realize it was the best decision I've ever made. Being part of this group makes me feel safe, and everyone who attends shares similar experiences. Together we support each other without judgment...

