

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

December 18, 2018

To the leadership of the [U.S. Conference of Catholic bishops](#):

It is long past time for you to *man up* and do the right thing! End wayward clergy's age-old source of ready cash by the Conference-wide implementation of genuinely secure procedures for handling the Church's primary source of income: the weekly collections! Your decades-old decision to hide behind the facade of individual bishops' administrative autonomy is unconscionable and must end now!

**NOTE:** The unacknowledged letter below is only the most recent in a quarter-century-long effort to cause the USCCB to end the loss of tens of millions of dollars annually to weekly thefts committed by wayward clergy and lay persons who succumb to the temptation presented by highly vulnerable Sunday collections in a still likely majority of the U.S. Conference's more than 17,000 parishes.

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September 21, 2018

### PERSONAL ATTENTION

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, President  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington, DC 20017-1104

Dear Cardinal DiNardo:

This refers to [my letter of March 12, 2017](#) (copy herewith) in which I briefly recounted my efforts toward moving the USCCB to eliminate the Sunday collection's status as an occasion of serious sin and a cause of substantial and recurring financial losses within an unknown but, in all likelihood, significant number of [the 17,000+ parishes](#) spread among [the 177 territorial arch/dioceses that make up the USCCB](#). While you did not see fit to acknowledge receipt of my letter, let alone provide a substantive reply, I am taking this opportunity to once again call upon you as President of the USCCB to challenge your membership to eliminate this sin-proliferating, revenue-depleting condition.

In [your August 16 statement in response to the Pennsylvania Grand Jury's report](#), along with the revelations about Cardinal McCarrick's moral degeneracy, you stated "*We are faced with a spiritual crisis that requires not only spiritual conversion, but practical changes to avoid repeating the sins and failures of the past that are so evident in the recent report.*" For me, the sincerity of that high-sounding statement will be proven or disproven by the USCCB's initiation or continued rejection of "practical changes" in this critical area. In that regard, you must know of the connection between easy access to undocumented collection funds and the ability of wayward clergymen to fund their evil pursuits.

Consider, for example, [Chicago's infamous Fr. Sorvillo](#) or, more recently, [the Dallas Diocese's Fr. Edmundo Paredes](#). Fr. Sorvillo was the first successful *catch* for Chicago's then newly implemented secure collection procedures, and his arrest no doubt exerted a deterrent effect on like-minded clergy and laity within that Archdiocese.

A visit to [your archdiocese's website](#) reveals that Galveston-Houston's parish financial guidelines are password-protected and thereby only available to pastors and key parish personnel. Still, I would like to think you or your predecessor implemented genuinely secure Sunday collection procedures Archdiocese-wide, and that they remain in effect at this writing. Unfortunately, their inaccessibility leaves me (and others) wondering.

In any case, Cardinal DiNardo, we both know that, with little more than the stroke of a pen under Canon Law ([Canon 455](#)), the USCCB could mandate the Conference-wide use of genuinely secure Sunday collection procedures that, properly implemented and monitored, would put a virtual end to Sunday collection thefts by anyone, whether lay, clergy or religious, including those who have used and will use those stolen monies to fund the seduction of innocent youths and the pursuit of other deviant lifestyles. The USCCB has known of that link for at least a quarter century but, for reasons best known to its leadership, has knowingly and repeatedly chosen to abandon the task of ending the weekly collections' vulnerability to the discretion of 177 individual prelates.

That brings us to the question of whether 177 separate diocesan finance staffs could determine how to effectively protect their arch/diocese's primary source of income. Fortunately, the answer to that question may be found in the results of [Voice of the Faithful's 2017 review of all 177 U.S. territorial arch/dioceses' websites](#). Question 10 of VOTF's review format asks whether two essential components of a parish's genuinely secure collection, counting and banking system are present: serially-numbered tamper-evident bags, and counting teams composed of at least three (3) members. Of the 145 dioceses, only 64 posted details of their Sunday collection procedures at their website, and only 7 of the 64 or just 11% of that number require the two critical elements noted above. Of the remaining 57 dioceses that posted their procedures, 32 require neither of the two critical elements and 25 require one or the other but not both. The archdioceses fared no better on Question 10, with 18 of the 32 posting particulars of their collection procedures, but only 2 of the 18 or just 11% requiring both the serially numbered bags and three-person counting teams. Six of the 18 require neither of the two elements and 10 require one or the other but not both. The absence of either of those two elements virtually guarantees the affected parish's collections are vulnerable to weekly theft.

As you can see from the above figures, Cardinal DiNardo, the 177 prelates are not now and, in all likelihood, never will be up to the task of effectively ending this blight. By its knowing and willful inaction, the USCCB has been indirectly financing sexual abusers for the past quarter century or longer, and for no other reason than to avoid stepping on the administrative toes of individual bishops. How shameful is that? Are you and your fellow USCCB officers afraid you won't be able to secure the necessary 2/3 majority vote to enable passage of the needed legislation? If so, is that a valid reason not to try? Of course not.

The USCCB's November meeting will be watched more closely than any in quite a few years, and I pray you will muster the courage to address this matter decisively.

Most sincerely,  
Michael W. Ryan