

## **Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church**

### Position Statement on Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up

Dated: February 14, 2019

While we are aware of the universal problem of sex abuse within various organizations, and while we honor and are grateful for the many dedicated clerics within our holy Catholic Church, we the parishioners of Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Appomattox, Virginia, understand that priests and other members of the worldwide Catholic Church have committed crimes against children, young people, and other vulnerable people, including rape, molestation, inappropriate touching, and intimidation. Further, we acknowledge that priests, bishops, archbishops and other leaders in the Catholic Church have made deliberate and systematic efforts to cover up these crimes, often resulting in relocation of the predators, which only served to protect the offenders and their institution, but not the victims.

While there is no evidence of such crimes within our parish, nonetheless we **condemn** and we **will not tolerate** sexual abuse, predation, and efforts to cover up these crimes here or anywhere within the universal Catholic Church.

The OLP faith community:

- absolutely stands in solidarity with the victims of sexual abuse and prays they will be healed and will receive justice.
- recognizes that we, as part of the institutional church, have a responsibility to understand the many and layered causes of the sex abuse problem.
- has a moral obligation to respond to criminal evidence and to support efforts that seek accountability and change.
- dedicates ourselves to protect our children, our young people and the members of our parish that are most vulnerable from sexual abuse, and demand a similar position within the Diocese of Richmond and the Archdiocese of Washington.
- supports the efforts of our bishop to initiate an independent audit of priest files within our diocese by former FBI personnel, and expects full transparency of the results of this audit and any ensuing legal actions within the limits of the law.
- will use this policy position as the foundation for a parish plan of action to ensure the safety of our parishioners, help to heal the wounds of victims, and support the repair of our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.
- is confident in the sincere belief that what we say and do as a parish family is the inspired work of Christ on Earth. We add credence to our creed.