

January 22, 2021

Rev. James Gallagher
Our Lady of Peace Parish
P.O. Box 668
Appomattox, VA 24522

Dear Father Gallagher,

I have been remiss in writing to acknowledge and thank you for the letter of November 13, 2020 that you submitted to me on behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council. I appreciate your sharing the concerns you have been discussing regarding the sexual abuse scandal. It is noteworthy that as a parish, you continue to seek ways to address the issue to bring healing to victim survivors. I commend you for these efforts.

In the event that the members of your parish community have not had a chance to see the details of the diocese's response, I hope they might have a chance to see the information on our web site. Here is a link: <https://richmonddiocese.org/diocese-response/>

If they would like additional material, the U.S.C.C.B. web site has extensive resources available that speak to the same issues you raised in your letter, i.e. support of victims and restoring trust. Here is a link to that web site: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/protection-children-young-people> to assist you as you review all that has been done and continues to be done in order to protect children and all who are vulnerable.

As Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, I am firmly committed to addressing accusations of abuse, quickly and transparently. Be assured we will continue to make protection of the most vulnerable a priority in our parishes, schools and throughout the Diocese. We encourage those who may have been harmed to report their abuse. We pray for all victims of abuse, express our deep sorrow, and seek forgiveness for any harm done. We ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing healing of God's people.

Thank you again for your comments and concerns.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond**