

The Committee for Education and Action on Sexual Abuse  
Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church,  
2174 Meadow Drive,  
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

June 14, 2021

Dear Bishop Knestout,

Greetings from the Committee for Education and Action on Sexual Abuse (CEASA) at Our Lady of Peace parish in Appomattox. We acknowledge your letter of January 22, 2021. We appreciate the informative links to sites re sexual abuse and how our Diocese is responding.

We also appreciate your assurance of protection of the most vulnerable in our Diocese, and your contrition for harms done in the past.

At our recent committee meeting, we discussed how to respond regarding the unaddressed issue of widening the aperture of the audit you directed in 2018, to include persons of the Diocese who may have been involved in the cover-up of sexual abuse committed by priests. Our concern is not the dredging up of the history of clergy sexual abuse, but rather bringing about complete transparency and full accountability for sins of the past. Only then can credibility be restored, and confidence in the future handling of acts of abuse be established.

You might ask why, if the Diocese now has in place practices and policies that will protect the vulnerable as well as offer support to victims, and you have offered assurance of protection along with acknowledgement of harms done, why is that not enough? Why do we think that addressing cover-ups is still so necessary and critically important?

It used to be that both the hierarchy and the laity embraced the idea that the reputation of our Holy Catholic Church needed to be protected at all cost. This same mindset was the norm in corporations, the military, police forces, academia, Boy Scouts, anywhere there was power and money. That is not the case today.

There has been an awakening to the intrinsic worth of the individual. We are told that "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and