



P.O. Box 256785
Chicago, IL 60625

Phone: 224.301.1968

nalm@nalm.org
www.NALM.org

September 6, 2018

His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Office of the Cardinal
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
1700 San Jacinto St.
PO Box 907
Houston, TX 77001

Your Eminence,

We, the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), have been in close mutual collaboration with many very supportive bishops, priests, deacons, and religious for over 40 years (1976). We, as members of the same Church, the same body of Christ, have all been wounded by the terrible sexual abuse scandal. Together we grieve for the pain and suffering of the victims of this abuse.

The current circumstances compel us to build upon the call to co-responsibility, and a new level of mutual accountability with bishops and pastors for the sake of NALM's and the churches' shared mission to end the cover up of abuse. Now is the time, more than ever before, to rely upon the fruitful collaboration of ordained and lay ministers.

Archbishop John Wester (NALM's Episcopal Moderator), in his Letter on the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandal dated August 22, 2018, reminds us that "Jesus Christ is 'the way, the truth and the life' and only He can show us the way forward as we seek to walk the path of healing. As always, prayer leads to action." We want you to know that NALM's first course of action is to pray for all bishops.

Secondly, we offer our commitment as a professional association to collaborate with you in working for a "safe environment" for all in the church. As you know, for many decades lay ministers have been faithfully serving in parishes and dioceses across the country, and currently are offering their leadership and expertise in their faith communities alongside bishops, priests, deacons, and religious.

As the USCCB and its National Review Board (NRB) call for increased lay leadership to assist in episcopal accountability, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard—A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* continues to be a vital resource for us all. *Co-Workers* specifically calls bishops to entrust “to laity responsibilities for leadership in particular areas of ministry” in “close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests and deacons” (p. 5). NALM is committed to working collaboratively with bishops, priests and deacons in a co-responsible and co-accountable way. We trust that the U.S. Bishops’ response to this crisis will include empowering lay leaders on the National Review Board with “the proper authority and independence,” as Archbishop Wester states in his letter on the abuse scandal.

We look forward to continued discussions and collaboration with bishops on how we can build upon and enhance the role of well-formed and faith-filled laity to promote healing in the Catholic Church on a parish and diocesan level as we navigate through this devastating crisis, and as the NRB said, to contribute as we can to “take concrete action to address the systemic problems underlying the problem of sexual abuse in the Church.”

In faith and prayer,

Deacon Keith Davis, MBA, Ed.D.

Board Chair

For the Board of Directors and Membership of the National Association for Lay Ministry

CC Msgr. Brian Bransfield
 Archbishop John C. Wester