

USCCB President Issues Statement on Pope Francis' Motu Proprio Decree

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has issued the following statement regarding the release of Pope Francis's Motu Proprio on May 9. The Motu Proprio, *Vos estis lux mundi* ("You are the light of the world"), is a worldwide order to the Church from the Pope, in response to the evil of sexual abuse. The new law comes three months after a meeting in Rome that brought together all episcopal conference presidents from across the globe to discuss the Church sex abuse crisis.

Cardinal DiNardo's partial statement follows:

"Today, Pope Francis ordered a worldwide response to the evil of sexual abuse. It calls for the establishment of easily accessible reporting systems, clear standards for the pastoral support of victims and their families, timeliness and thoroughness of investigations, whistleblower protection for those making allegations, and active involvement of the laity. It also leaves latitude for national bishops' conferences, such as the USCCB, to specify still more to account for their local circumstances. We receive the Motu Proprio *Vos estis lux mundi* ('You are the light of the world') as a blessing that will empower the Church everywhere to bring predators to justice, no matter what rank they hold in the Church. It also permits the Church the time and opportunity to bring spiritual healing.

The Holy Father said a 'continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church.' Pope Francis was clear that this responsibility 'falls, above all, on the successors of the Apostles.' As part of this responsibility, bishops also will be held accountable under the authority of this Motu Proprio, which covers sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable persons, sexual acts compelled through the abuse of authority, and any coverup of such crimes.

I am grateful for the opportunity to build upon the excellent foundation of the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, and the Statement of Episcopal Commitment, all of which date back to 2002. The existing framework in the United States including victim outreach, zero tolerance, reporting allegations to civil authorities, and lay expertise on review boards, among other measures - positions us readily to bring the Holy Father's instructions to action. By embracing the painful experience of survivors and working on these new protections, let us pray we continue to grow into a stronger Church."

Please find the respective translations of the *motu proprio* here:

English: <http://bit.ly/motoproprioEnglish>

Spanish: <http://bit.ly/motoproprioSpanish>

