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Letter of the Members of the Organizing Committee to the participants in the meeting “The protection of minors in the Church” (21-24 February 2019)

The following is the Letter sent by the Organizing Committee to the participants in the meeting “The protection of minors in the Church”, which will take place in the Vatican from 21 to 24 February 2019, signed by Cardinal Blasé J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, U.S.A.; by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, archbishop of Bombay, India, and president of the Episcopal Conference of India; by H.E. Msgr. Charles Scicluna, archbishop of Malta and adjunct secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and by Rev. Fr. Hans Zollner, S.J., president of the Centre for the Protection of Minors of the Pontifical Gregorian University, member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and appointed as referent of the same Committee:

Letter to participants

Dear Brothers in Christ,

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Cor 12:26). With these words Pope Francis began his Letter to the People of God (August 2018) in response to the abuse crisis facing the Church. Those abused by clerics were also damaged when “We showed no care for the little ones; we abandoned them.” And so, “If, in the past, the response was one of omission, today we want solidarity, in the deepest and most challenging sense, to become our way of forging present and future history.”

Absent a comprehensive and communal response, not only will we fail to bring healing to victim survivors, but the very credibility of the Church to carry on the mission of Christ will be in jeopardy throughout the world.

The first step must be acknowledging the truth of what has happened. For this reason, we urge each episcopal conference president to reach out and visit with victim survivors of clergy sex abuse in your respective countries prior to the meeting in Rome, to learn first-hand the suffering that they have endured.

Additionally, we ask you to answer the questionnaire attached to this letter. It provides a tool for all the

participants of the meeting in February to express their opinions constructively and critically as we move forward, to identify where help is needed to bring about reforms now and in the future, and to help us get a full picture of the situation in the Church.

With this in mind, the Holy Father has asked us to thank you for your support in completing the attached questionnaire to better prepare for the meeting, and to urgently invite you to take up this road together. The Holy Father is convinced that through collegial cooperation, the challenges facing the Church can be met.

But each of us needs to own this challenge, coming together in solidarity, humility, and penitence to repair the damage done, sharing a common commitment to transparency, and holding everyone in the Church accountable.

Please note that we would be grateful to have your responses as soon as possible, but no later than January 15.

God bless in this Advent season,

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Cardinal Oswald Gracias
Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna
Fr. Hans Zollner S.J.
