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Statement from Archbishop Leonard Blair on the Letter from former Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Carlo M. Viganò

The recent very troubling statement of Archbishop Viganò, former Vatican Ambassador to the United States, brings, in the words of the President of our U.S. Conference of Bishops, “particular focus and urgency” to the “examination into how the grave moral failings of a brother bishop could have been tolerated for so long and proven no impediment to his advancement.” This is a profound concern that we all share and the truth has to be told. Once again I ask God to bring the truth to light and to bring healing and help to all victims of sexual abuse.

Any student of history knows the tremendous storms, both from within and from without, that have threatened to overwhelm the Church in her long history so as to make a lie of Christ’s promise that “the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” In modern times perhaps we have been lulled into complacency about the power of evil. Yet as St. Paul says, “our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).

St. Augustine, the very model of a good bishop, who died around the year 430 and whose feast we celebrate on August 28th, spoke in his homilies about the scandal of bad shepherds. He insisted that Christians avoid two opposite extremes: leaving the Church because of the scandal provoked by wicked shepherds, on the one hand, and putting one’s trust in good shepherds instead of Christ, on the other.

Please pray for strong faith in Christ and his promise. And please pray for your bishops and priests, remembering that the overwhelming majority of the clergy are not guilty of the heinous crimes we all deplore. I join you in this prayer and I pledge to do my part as a Bishop to unmask whatever has led to our present anguish.

August 28, 2018