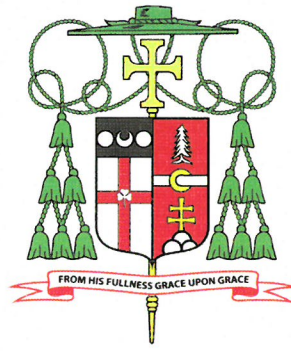


**DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**



(717) 657-4804
FAX (717) 657-1370
4800 Union Deposit Road
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17111-3710
Bishop'sOffice@hbgdiocese.org
www.hbgdiocese.org

October 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Many of you attended one of the nine listening sessions, held earlier this year in various diocesan locations regarding the sexual abuse scandal. I am grateful for the opportunity to have met with you and to have listened to your frustrations, anger, thoughts and opinions. My heart continues to go out to everyone affected by this scandal, particularly survivors and their families.

More time was needed during those sessions to accommodate all the questions and comments. My sincere desire to reach out to you remains. I want to hear from everyone, especially anyone who did not have the opportunity to express your feelings and ideas at the sessions. If you were unable to attend a listening session, were reluctant to stand up before audience or were concerned about anything at all and did not speak, I want to give you an opportunity to express yourself.

Restoring Trust, LLC, a group of laity in our Diocese, has undertaken a number of valuable initiatives, including the establishment of an Independent Laity Advisory Council. This Council is separate from any Diocesan Office, including my own. I have met with them and I recognize their merit and value as an engaged lay group. They have prepared a questionnaire survey which I invite you to consider completing. Your responses will be helpful in fulfilling my pastoral duties, as we go forward in our Diocese.

Please complete the survey by November 1, 2019. Since this is an independent survey, I ask that you return it to the address or email noted on the survey form. You may choose to remain anonymous. The final report will be sent to anyone who provided an email address with your completed questionnaire.

My prayers continue to be offered for the healing of all victims of abuse. Their pain remains our great concern. The atrocities they suffered must never happen again in the Church. In the words of Pope Francis: "Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated. The pain of survivors and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults. (*Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the People of God*, August 20, 2018)."

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald W. Gainer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer