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Dear Brother Priests, Deacons, Subdeacons, Consecrated Women and Men, People of God:

Soon I will meet with our Eparchial Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, and thus I would like to give you an update and address the concern of so many of you who ask, “are we doing enough?”

The recent news has been devastating. We wonder if we will ever recover from the shadow of abuse. Nonetheless, we remain vigilant, and ever ready to address any concerns.

As you know, I removed a priest from ministry last year because of a substantiated allegation. Since then, we have not received any new allegations. We hope it will remain this way.

Several years ago I reviewed an allegation, and I also removed a priest from ministry. In the thirteen years I have served as Bishop in this Eparchy, I have taken time to visit with victims of abuse; listening to their stories has been heartbreaking. The Eparchy stands ready to act on any new allegations. We hope and pray there will be no more but we stand ready to assist anyone who makes a claim.

Our Victims Abuse Coordinator continues to be Mrs. Rosanne Solomon who has served in this role for several years. Over a year ago, Mrs. Vivian Akel, a licensed social worker and counselor, became head of the Office for Child and Youth Protection. Our Eparchial Review Board consists of Dr. Anthony Shaia, as Chair, Dr. Eileen Dombo, Michael Zohab, Richard Hibey, and Reverend Bassam Saade.

If anyone has any concerns, please feel free to direct them to me, to Vivian Akel, or to anyone mentioned above. Our policies and procedures for allegations were revised last year to include as crimes vulnerable adults and use of child pornography. Our policies have always been accessible on our website: [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org). We remain vigilant.

In our Eparchy, every member of the clergy, religious and laity working with children have signed to accept their agreement with these policies. We have all had a national background check, and we have all been trained in a prevention of child abuse within the local Latin diocese. Our Church should be a shining example of safety and respect for children and youth. I pledge myself once again, and our entire Eparchy, to this promise.

May God give us the grace to rid the Church, and the world, of this horrible crime; and may God assist us in healing those so terribly harmed by abuse.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+Gregory". The plus sign is a simple cross, and the name "Gregory" is written in a cursive, flowing script.

+Gregory John Mansour

GJM/rl