

# Empowering Catholics of Pittsburgh

Spring, 2019

Dear Clergy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

We are Empowering Catholics of Pittsburgh (ECOP), a grassroots group of devout but disheartened local Catholics committed to getting to the bottom of what ails the Church of Pittsburgh. We believe that the best way for there to be accountability of diocesan leadership is for the priests, deacons, and laity to work together. The laity and the clergy on the front lines of ministry have had little or no say in what happens in our diocese. It is our purpose to fix that. Through the enclosed survey, we hope to give you, the clergy of Pittsburgh, a chance to have your voices be finally heard, on a completely ANONYMOUS and CONFIDENTIAL basis.

But first, we want to explain who we are and how the idea for this groundbreaking survey came about. Last fall, the two of us joined another laity group, Catholics for Change in our Church (CCOC). As co-chairs of the Lay Oversight of Diocesan Functions Focus Group of CCOC, we asked various priests what we could do to help our Church. The priests told us that they wanted a means to evaluate diocesan leadership and to share their thoughts about what is going on in the diocese, but to do so independent of the diocese, anonymously and confidentially.

We then consulted with experts in the field, not affiliated with the diocese, about the best way to begin the process of establishing accountability of the Church hierarchy to the laity and the clergy. They recommended evaluations at the diocesan level through an independent, open, and fair process using a survey conducted on a strictly anonymous basis. They also agreed to help us with the content and form of that survey.

For many months, members of our focus group worked tirelessly with local priests, expert consultants, and other members of CCOC to develop a well-thought out, comprehensive clerical survey. In February of this year, we specifically informed Bishop David A. Zubik, by letter from CCOC and in a face-to-face meeting with him and five other diocesan representatives, of our plans to conduct regular evaluations of the bishop and his curia. To give participants in the survey the benefit of all available information, we agreed within CCOC to wait until after the bishop's pastoral letter was released in March to conduct the survey. Then, on March 24, CCOC decided to postpone conducting the clerical survey until some future date. We disagree with that postponement because we believe it is essential to hear what you, the clergy, have to say in order for lay groups like ours and CCOC to develop informed action plans. Consequently, we resigned

from our co-chair positions within CCOC in order to conduct this survey of priests and deacons of the diocese. That is how ECOP was formed.

We, accordingly, humbly ask you to please complete and return this survey to us in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible but no later than May 7, 2019. Be assured that the survey process will be completely anonymous, confidential, and independent of the diocese. Individual responses will not be shared with the diocese. Only two members of our leadership team will view the completed surveys and tabulate the results. Tabulated, aggregate results will be released to you, the clergy; the Bishop of Pittsburgh; the Papal Nuncio in Washington, DC; the Congregation of Clergy; the laity of the diocese; and the public at large.

When we met with Bishop Zubik in February, we told him that without accountability of the leaders of the diocese to those they are supposed to serve—the clergy and laity of the diocese—the Church will continue to flounder. Your voices are the missing pieces to the puzzle of how to mend our local Church. You can help us take the first step towards achieving urgently needed accountability and transparency, as well as providing critical feedback to the bishop by participating in this survey. The higher the level of participation in the survey, the more meaningful and impactful will be the results.

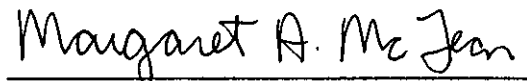
If you have any questions about ECOP or the survey, please feel free to contact either of us at (412)496-6803 for Sandy Lannis or at (412)731-0410 for Peg McLean.

Finally, this is our vision and profound hope—that, prompted by the Holy Spirit, your prophetic voices will rise up and help heal our Church. When the Holy Spirit intervenes, things can dramatically change for the better. With deep love for our Church, we urge you to complete and return the enclosed survey so that your views are finally heard and addressed.

Thank you and God bless you.



Sandra L. Lannis



Margaret A. McLean

Empowering Catholics of Pittsburgh