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The following are excerpts of statements made by the bishops of several Texas dioceses Jan. 31 on the disclosure of the names of clergy who have been credibly accused of sex abuse of minors. The lists from all 15 Texas dioceses included the names of 278 clergy dating to 1950.

From Bishop Patrick Zurek of Amarillo: "The Diocese of Amarillo seeks to express regret and apologizes for the failing and sins that have hurt the church so deeply, especially in our most vulnerable members. The diocese especially asks forgiveness for the failings of those who have held positions of leadership in the church."

From Bishop Joe Vasquez of Austin: "With a contrite heart, today I have published a list of clergy and religious who have been credibly accused of committing sexual abuse against a minor. ... It is my prayer and hope that publishing this list will help to bring healing from the hurt and anger caused by the lack of accountability and transparency on the part of church leadership.

"The victims of sexual abuse by clergy have experienced much pain; we must continue to pray and care for our brothers and sisters who have suffered greatly. I apologize to the victims and their families for the diocese's failures. The church must always be willing to recognize and correct its failings."

From Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville: "An accurate accounting of the past is necessary for us to move forward with integrity. I and the bishops in Texas believe

that releasing the names after an exhaustive review of the files will contribute to restore trust and healing. The humble and honest acceptance of the truth calls us to move forward in poverty of spirit for purification and renewal. We must think of the victims first and be sensitive to any renewed pain this release may cause.

"In these times of sorrowful purification, we know that by prayer and penance we journey together in the Lord. As I shared with you in September in a letter published in our diocesan newspaper, it is necessary now more than ever, that we dedicate ourselves anew as a people of faith to the work the Lord has commended to us, to bind the wounds of the broken-hearted and announce the power of his grace that is greater than any evil. Let us preach the Gospel, serve the poor, practice evangelical virtues, pray for sinners, and always hope in the triumph of grace over sin."

From Bishop Edward Burns of Dallas: "Opening our files to outside investigators and releasing the names is something I have been considering for some time. Since I believe it is the right thing to do, the Diocese of Dallas has had outside investigators, a team made up of former FBI, state troopers and other experts in law enforcement, examining our files since February, and they still have work to do. ... My brother bishops and I recognize that this type of transparency and accountability is what the Catholic faithful want and need.

"My brother bishops and I hope this action can be a step that leads to healing for all those who have been harmed by members of the church. I add my sincere sorrow for the pain that has been caused for victims and the Catholic faithful."

From Bishop Robert Coerver of Lubbock: "The release of these names – which is occurring in all the dioceses of Texas – is a good-faith effort on the part of the bishops of Texas to increase transparency and help to restore some confidence among the ranks of the faithful, that the administrations of our dioceses are serious about ending the cycle of abuse in the church and in society at large, which has been allowed to exist for decades.

"The scourge of abuse must be stopped!

"I realize that this release of names will be a source of pain for victims, survivors, and their families. I realize that this might also be occasion for more victims to come forward and to be appropriately ministered to. We continue to pray for victims and survivors of abuse of any kind and especially for those families whose trust in the church has been broken."

From Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler: "Personally, and with my brother bishops, I express my deep sorrow to the survivors of abuse and my commitment to providing pastoral care for each survivor. I apologize for the failings and sins that have hurt the Church so deeply, especially with our most vulnerable members. I especially ask forgiveness for the failings of those who have held positions of leadership in the church.

"As I have said before, we have all been deeply hurt and saddened by the scandals in the church. Please know that the Diocese of Tyler will do everything possible to prevent abuse of any kind. As your bishop, I am personally committed to this and I will support our priests and deacons as we seek to joyfully live out our ministry in Jesus Christ. I will also ensure that we are held to the standards of Christian virtues proclaimed by Jesus Christ."

From Bishop Brendan Cahill of Victoria: "The scandals that have developed in the church since last summer have been a source of deep hurt, anger and shame. I've listened to personal stories of clergy abuse survivors, read many articles and books about the topic of clergy sexual abuse, and prayed to God for empathy into the pain experienced and insights for channels of healing and hope.

"The jurors of the Pennsylvania grand jury offered the word 'hope' in acknowledging one bishop who responded to their requests for an interview. They write on page 305: 'We commend (Erie) Bishop (Lawrence) Persico for acknowledging past abuse, unmasking the abusers and encouraging accountability. In his testimony we find hope.' These three actions commended by our fellow citizens served as a guide for the bishops in the state of Texas when we were meeting to discuss the crisis in September 2018.

"At that meeting we committed that on or before Jan. 31, 2019, we would publish the names of priests credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor."

Update: Texas dioceses name clergy with credible allegations of sex abuse

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