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Catholic bishops take initial steps; must do more to create a new culture of leadership

Leadership Roundtable welcomes the steps taken this week by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to address the crises of abuse and leadership failures, but believes significantly more needs to be done.

“Catholics are looking for robust actions and long-term solutions to the twin crises of abuse and leadership failures,” says Kim Smolik, CEO of Leadership Roundtable. “While the bishops took important initial steps, more remains to be done to address the root causes and create a new culture of leadership that values accountability, transparency and co-responsibility with clergy and laity.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) voted to pass a series of directives that will set up a reporting model that would utilize a national third-party reporting hotline, an affirmation of episcopal commitment, a protocol for removed or resigned bishops, and the implementation of Pope Francis’ *motu proprio*.

“While we have not seen the final wording of the directives, we are pleased that multiple bishops intervened to specify the need for greater lay involvement and hope that as the bishops work out the specific details for implementation that they will include greater accountability, transparency, and co-responsibility between clergy and laity,” notes Smolik. “As was noted by Bishop Shawn McKnight, the National Advisory Council, and the National Review Board, lay involvement should be ‘mandatory’ and not a recommendation.”

Leadership Roundtable sent the bishops [recommendations](#) ahead of this week’s meeting that encouraged the USCCB not only to pass these preliminary measures mentioned above, but also to ensure those measures are supported with national standards and definitions and a study into the root causes.

“New procedures are a start, but the pervasive culture that led to the crises is still in place,” notes Smolik. “A new culture of leadership is necessary if we are to truly address the crises. It starts by acknowledging the leadership failures, looking at the root causes, providing new formation in seminaries and other educational institutions, setting up governance structures with checks, balances, etc.”

“Lay Catholics are lending their expertise and look forward to continued work with the clergy to create a new culture of co-responsible leadership.”

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Leadership Roundtable promotes best practices and accountability in the management, finances, communications, and human resources development of the Catholic Church in the U.S., including greater incorporation of the expertise of the laity.

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