



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, CONTACT:
nicole@leadershiproundtable.org, 202.765.0650

Leadership Roundtable: “Healthy leadership and management leads to a healthy Church”

A statement in response to the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report
and credible allegations against former Cardinal McCarrick

Leadership Roundtable was formed by lay, religious, and ordained leaders in the wake of the 2002 sexual abuse crisis and we remain resolute in our conviction that healthy leadership and management leads to a healthy Church.

The Catholic Church in the United States, and elsewhere, is at a precipice. The abuse and cover-up revealed by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report and the credible allegations against former Cardinal McCarrick point to the failure of episcopal leadership and management that has further deepened the crisis of trust permeating the Church. These leadership and management failures have damaged the lives of abuse survivors and their communities, fractured the trust of the laity, affected the morale of lay and ordained Church leaders, further alienated the relationship of young people with the Church, and compromised the Catholic voice of moral authority in the public square.

Catholic leaders, lay and ordained, must create a new culture of leadership and management that is transparent, accountable, competent, and grounded in justice in order to restore trust and safeguard the essential mission of the Catholic Church.

For the culture to change, the Church must practice accountability at every level and not just in terms of sexual abuse. Leadership Roundtable aims to be a collaborative partner amongst the efforts of faithful lay and ordained leaders to transform the leadership and management culture of parishes, dioceses, and other Catholic institutions, with the inclusion and expertise of the laity. The underlying conditions creating this crisis were decades in the making; solving these problems will require a long-term, transformational change that must begin with immediate steps. This includes protecting children and vulnerable adults, providing justice to those who have been harmed, and holding offending leadership accountable.

We agree with Cardinal DiNardo that this is a “moral catastrophe” and we support the call from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Executive Committee for “...practical changes to avoid repeating the sins and failures of the past...” We also affirm Pope Francis’ request to purge all forms of clericalism and his appeal to “create a culture able to prevent such [abuse] from happening...”



We believe trust can be restored, culture transformed, and the mission of the Church can thrive again by:

- publicly committing to develop and invest in a new culture of leadership and moral management that is transparent and accountable,
- implementing a leadership and management model based on standards of best practices properly adapted to ecclesiology and canon law,
- creating an enduring mechanism to ensure checks and balances at multiple levels of the Church with credible oversight,
- convening and including independent lay experts from a range of disciplines in investigations, review boards, and other leadership and management positions,
- establishing mechanisms for full financial transparency and accountability,
- ensuring human resource practices that include effective selection, training, assignment, and evaluations,
- investing in leadership and management training in seminary education and ongoing formation programs for lay ecclesial ministers, diocesan staff, seminarians, deacons, priests, and bishops,
- rebuilding trust based on transparent and measurable change in the new leadership and management culture.

Leadership Roundtable's board and staff offer our heartfelt prayers to those who were abused and abandoned by our faith leaders. We also acknowledge all the dedicated lay and ordained leaders who day after day strive to live in the footsteps of Christ and model how to live the gospel. Our belief in the promise and potential of the Church's mission informs our commitment each day and strengthens our belief that to do nothing is to be complicit. As lay, religious, and ordained leaders, in this critical time we understand that the solution rests with each of us in the Church to live up to our respective ecclesial responsibility and to act.

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Kim Smolik, CEO of Leadership Roundtable,
and members of the board are available for interviews.

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.

To learn more, visit leadershiproundtable.org