



**LEADERSHIP  
ROUNDTABLE**  
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## Catholic Bishops, Clergy, Laity Contribute to Plan to Resolve Abuse Crisis in Catholic Church

The Vatican meeting on abuse concluded this week and bishops are now back in their home countries to address the twin crises of abuse and leadership failures.

To support the efforts of U.S. Church leaders in addressing the twin crises, [Leadership Roundtable is publishing the top recommendations](#) generated at the Catholic Partnership Summit that was held February 1–2, 2019 in Washington, DC. More than 200 lay, religious, and ordained Catholic leaders and experts participated in the Summit from 43 dioceses, including Cardinal Cupich, Cardinal O’Malley, and Cardinal Tobin, multiple bishops, as well as Fr. Hans Zollner from the Centre for Child Protection in Rome. Together, the participants identified some of the root causes of the crises, lifted up best practices, and created a robust set of actionable recommendations that we have grouped according to accountability, co-responsibility, and transparency: similar themes that the Vatican used to structure their three-day meeting.

“Leadership Roundtable calls upon Catholic leaders to take swift and bold action,” says Kim Smolik, Leadership Roundtable CEO, “The recommendations included in this report demonstrate how we can create a new culture of leadership, as well as a new culture of how to respond to abuse. Both are necessary if our Church is to address the root causes of these crises and bring forth recovery and reform.”

Some examples of the recommendations include:

- Commit to a preferential option for abuse victims and families, make it a priority to meet with survivors; keep survivors, families, and affected parishioners at all levels of decision-making
- Create a governance structure that is transparent with layered checks, balances, and oversight, and includes the expertise of the laity at the parish, diocesan, and national level
- Implement ongoing professional and personal formation, as well as 360-degree assessments for bishops and all Catholic leaders that begin in seminaries and ministerial programs; assessments should be linked to appointments

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), released a statement following the Vatican meeting that outlined steps that need to be taken and said, “Achieving these goals will require the active involvement and collaboration of the laity.”

“Catholic laity are more than ready for change and eager to work with clergy to build a new culture of leadership and management,” says Smolik. “The crises of abuse and leadership failures have affected each of us, laity, religious, and ordained and, thus, it is up to us to urgently work together to heal the body of Christ.”

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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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