BISHOPACCOUNTABILITY.ORG

Hi everyone,

I am writing from Peru, where Pope Leo is wrapping up his visit to South America.

In the 18 months he's been pope, he's taken no steps toward ending child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. That's why I came here.

Shortly before Leo arrived, we held a news conference in Lima to launch our new database detailing child sexual abuse allegations against 77 Peruvian clergy. The news conference was widely covered, especially in Spanish-language media (e.g., *El País* and Associated Press). Already, Peruvian victims have written to us, thanking us, and providing more information.

We followed up our database launch with a letter to Leo, emailed a few days ago as he was returning to Chiclayo, Peru, the diocese he led for eight years. See our letter below.

Pope Leo hasn't replied, but we'll persist. We'll keep posting documents and data, focusing on the testimonies of victims and the Church's response. The courage of victims is what keeps us going, along with the support of people like you. Thank you for caring!



Letter to Pope Leo from BishopAccountability.org.
Emailed 8am Thursday, November 12.

Dear Pope Leo,

On Friday, you travel to your beloved Chiclayo. That city's faithful will throng the streets and give prayers of thanks for your return. What an opportunity this could be for you to do something so brave, decisive, and loving that it will set an example for every bishop and religious superior in not just Peru, but the global church.

Earlier this week, you promised victims in Argentina that you would "strengthen measures for protection, well-being, welcome, and accompaniment within the Church." Begin in Chiclayo: End that diocese's cover-up of cases of sex abuse and make it instead a shining example of deep compassion and fierce child protection.

Your example will inspire your brother bishops and could mark a turning point in the crisis of clergy sex abuse in your beloved second home.

Pope Leo, the situation in Peru is dire.

Last week, my organization published a list of 77 accused clergy and consecrated laymen in the Peruvian church.

That number is a fraction of the actual total.

Comparisons to similar-size countries where the church has disclosed abuse data leads us to estimate that Peru's actual victim count is in the thousands and that hundreds of accused child molesters are working or have worked in the Peruvian church.

When you were bishop of Chiclayo, you called for an end to secrecy about abuse cases. "We reject cover-ups and secrecy," you said in a 2019 interview, noting that they "cause a great deal of harm."

Tragically, though, abuse cases in Chiclayo during your eight years as bishop were shrouded in secrecy, and that cover-up persists today. Your successor, Bishop Edison Edgardo Farfán, refuses to inform the public of abusive priests and reportedly withholds therapy payments from victims. Moreover, the very public discrediting of one survivor, Ana María Quispe, surely has caused other Chiclayo victims to remain silent.

Remedy this deplorable situation. Instruct Bishop Farfán to publicly name clergy who have admitted or have been credibly accused of sexual abuse. Tell him to release the diocese's documents about those cases. Order him to pay for victims' therapy and specify that he not put any obstacles in their path.

Address reparations also. In Spain, you compelled the church to cooperate with a state-run protocol for compensating victims. Has the Chiclayo diocese given financial reparations to its victims? Ensure that all of its victims receive fair compensation for

their injuries.

Finally, Holy Father, we respectfully urge you to revisit unfinished business and account candidly for your own responses to abuse as Chiclayo bishop, beginning with the allegations against priests Alfonso Obando, Eleuterio Vásquez, and Ricardo Yesquén.

- In 2019, you ordered **Father Alfonso Obando** removed from ministry after allegations emerged. Yet according to The New York Times, more than a dozen Facebook posts, including some during your tenure, showed that the priest kept ministering, sometimes to children. In 2020, while you were still bishop, Obando used a parish Facebook page to ask children to send him photos of themselves on WhatsApp. He wasn't removed from the priesthood until 2025. You and Bishop Farfan owe the people of Chiclayo an explanation for why he remained in ministry for so long. Pope Leo, your failure to monitor Obando's actions gave him years of additional access to children.

- When victims reported **Padre Eleuterio Vásquez** to you in April 2022, you promised to remove him from ministry pending investigation, but evidence indicates you did not do this: social media posts while he ostensibly was under investigation reveal that on at least three occasions, he participated as a priest at Masses, including one time with you. [Source: The New York Times, June 28, 2025.]

- In 2025, when Pope Francis was in his final days, Vásquez reportedly requested to be removed from the priesthood, and his request was accepted – an extraordinarily speedy development, suggestive of guilt. Yet neither you nor Bishop Farfán have acknowledged his laicization publicly, and both of you have stayed silent while his victims have been discredited. Furthermore, according to El País, as of a year ago, the diocese still was not paying for medication or mental health counseling for at least one of Vásquez's victims, Ana María Quispe. Respectfully, Pope Leo, you bear some moral responsibility for her suffering. You can relieve it.

- Ms. Quispe also told you of her abuse by **Padre Ricardo Yesquén.** She reported him to you in 2020 and again in 2022. On both occasions, you told her that the priest was ill and out of active ministry. In 2024, Bishop Farfán repeated this, adding that Yesquén "does not have the capacity to defend himself, so that a case against him cannot be opened." His illness is unfortunate, but certainly, a thorough investigation could still be conducted, with possible witnesses interviewed. Did you or Bishop Farfán do enough to bring closure to this case?

Pope Leo, you are rightfully hailed as heroic and compassionate for the bold actions you took against the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, whose atrocities continue to be revealed. You intervened on behalf of its victims when no one else would. We now pray that you will do the same for the victims of Chiclayo's own priests. Give an unflinching accounting of cases buried in that diocese. Your candor will anger some of your brother bishops, but as you said earlier this week, "When being just and honest comes at a price, pay it."

God bless you and your work.

Sincerely,
Anne Barrett Doyle
Co-Director
BishopAccountability.org