



BISHOP DAVID ZUBIK'S STATEMENT ON THE RELEASE OF THE GRAND JURY REPORT

Thank you for being here today.

It is difficult to stand here before you today. Yet, I wouldn't want to be, I couldn't be, any other place than with you at this moment.

The women and men of the Grand Jury have spoken. They have spoken for victims. To those women and men and all those they have spoken for: We hear you. The Church hears you. I hear you.

First: Let me say that, in the name of the Church of Pittsburgh, and in my own name, and in the name of my predecessors: We are sorry, I am sorry.

I take this report to heart. It is a story of peoples' lives; people who need to be heard, people who need to be healed. It is a cause to which we must remain committed long after this story has faded from the headlines.

No one who has read it can be unaffected.

Some are affected because they are victims of child sexual abuse, and the release of this report either will help them to heal or will reopen wounds they have worked hard to heal.

Some are affected because they are moms and dads who empathize with the undying pain of the mom or dad of a victim.

Some are affected because they will feel betrayed by a Church that has been their inspiration.

I promise to continue to meet with any victim to apologize to them in person and in the name of the Church. Today, I again apologize to any person or family whose trust, faith and well-being has been devastated by men who were ordained to be the image of Christ.

Ever since I first met victims of clergy child sexual abuse in 1988, I have seen the immense pain that this crime causes to its victims, to their loved ones and to the heart of Jesus. Their words break my heart. I have cried with them and for them over the damage done to them and their families by men whose lives should have been committed to protecting their souls from harm. I dedicate myself to helping them and to doing everything possible to prevent such abuse from happening again.

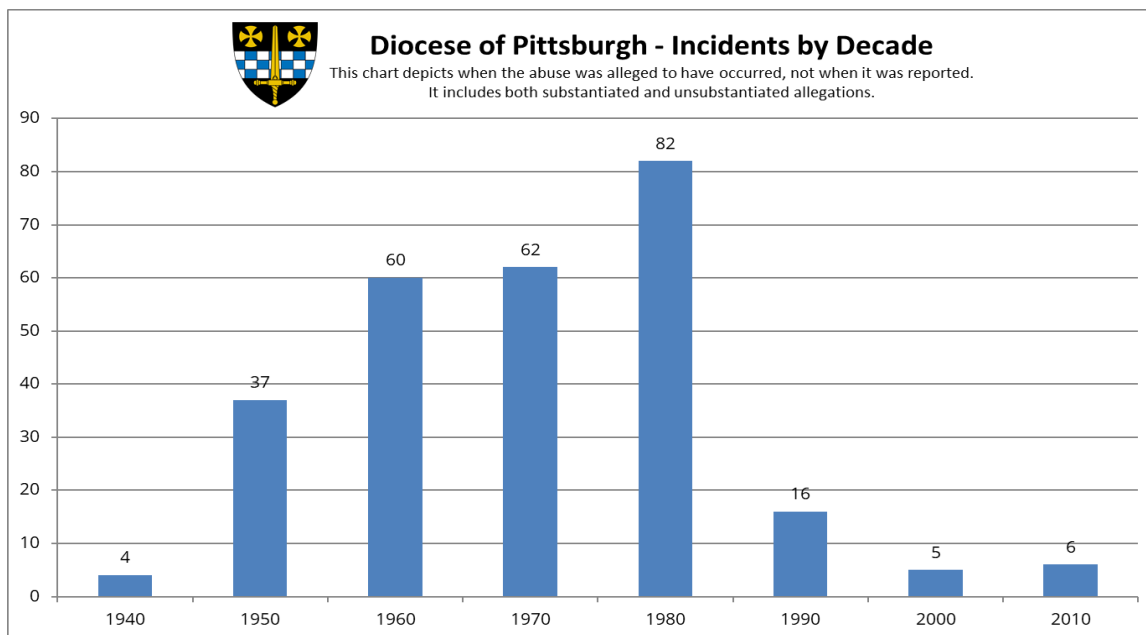
We cannot bury our heads in the sand. There were instances in the past, as outlined in this report, when the Church acted in ways that did not respond effectively to victims. Swift and firm responses to allegations should have started long before they did. For that I express profound regret. At the same time, I express gratitude to survivors who have taught us to respond with compassion to those who are wounded and with determination to remove offenders from ministry.

To apologize and express sorrow for the past is an important step. But it is not enough. Continued action is necessary.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh today is not the Church that is described in the Grand Jury Report. It has not been for a long time. Over the course of the last 30 years, we have made significant changes to how we prevent abuse and report allegations.

The issue of assisting victims and of creating safe environments for our children is primary and paramount. I want to show the faithful and our broader community that we have learned from the past. We have implemented reforms to prevent child sexual abuse. And we will continue to do so. It's one thing to tell you what we've done. It's another to show you.

This graph highlights the sharp decline in reported incidents of child sexual abuse since the Diocese of Pittsburgh began to implement reforms in the late 1980s. It depicts when the abuse was alleged to have occurred, not when it was reported. At least 90 percent of all reported cases occurred before 1990.



Also, it is important to note that there is no priest or deacon in public ministry today in the Diocese of Pittsburgh with a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse against him.

Let me share with you some of the actions taken by the Diocese over the last thirty years to address child sexual abuse.

- For over 30 years, seminarians have been screened through psychological testing.
- The curriculum at seminaries has been overhauled to better prepare men for a healthy celibate lifestyle.
- Beginning in 1989, we have engaged an Independent Review Board to address allegations of child sexual abuse.
- Since 1993, a Diocesan Assistance Coordinator has met with victims and continues to respond to their needs.
- We offer psychological counseling for victims and their families with the licensed therapist of their choice.
- We have provided financial assistance to victims.

- Since 1993, we have encouraged victims to contact civil authorities and since 2002 we have committed ourselves to doing the same.
- We are and have been transparent in our policies – relaying information to our faithful and the media.
- All our churches and schools are required to display our toll-free child sex abuse hotline and a number for local Child Protective Services.
- We have conducted child protection workshops and online training for more than 70,000 clergy, employees and volunteers in our churches, schools and institutions.
- We have secured criminal and child abuse background checks for more than 70,000 clergy, employees and volunteers
- We have created an Office for the Protection of Children and Young People to oversee these efforts.
- Finally, independent auditors review and evaluate our child protection practices every year, with on-site audits occurring every three years.

We pledge to continue these practices, working closely with local law enforcement, who are the front line in the effort to eliminate child sexual abuse and to prosecute perpetrators.

We are constantly evaluating and searching for new ways to strengthen our practices to prevent child sexual abuse. Today I am identifying three new steps.

- We have engaged an expert on the prevention and prosecution of child sexual abuse to thoroughly review our practices and make recommendations for improvement. Shay Bilchik, a Research Professor at Georgetown University, is the former president of the Child Welfare League of America. He has extensive experience as a state prosecutor in Florida specializing in children’s issues. He was also administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice, where his portfolio included child protection. He has already begun a preliminary review of our work.
- We have created a position and are hiring an experienced professional to actively monitor clergy who have been removed from ministry following allegations of child sexual abuse.
- With the release of the report, and as promised, we are in the process of posting on our website a list of 83 priests of the Diocese of Pittsburgh against whom there have been allegations of sexual abuse of minors, including some that the Grand Jury chose not to publish. In its report on Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Grand Jury names 90 priests and religious brothers as offenders. It must be noted that of this number, 68 are priests of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and 22 are either priests of other dioceses or priests or brothers of religious orders.

Our published list is delineated as follows:

- ◆ Those who are living and have been removed from ministry;
- ◆ Those removed from ministry who are now deceased;
- ◆ Those who were deceased when an allegation was made against them.

In the past I truly believed that turning these names over to local law enforcement was appropriate and sufficient action. I was concerned about releasing names when the priest was

deceased and could not defend himself. However, I believe that the conclusion of the Grand Jury investigation requires a higher level of transparency on our part.

There is also a separate listing of clergy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh against whom allegations were made which were not substantiated as child sexual abuse, but whose names appear in the Grand Jury report. Some of these clergy remain in ministry.

Not included in the list are priests and brothers from religious orders and clergy from other dioceses. Their names appear in the Grand Jury report because the abuse was alleged to have occurred while they lived or served in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. When the allegations were brought forth we removed them from ministry if they were still active in the diocese. The Diocese of Pittsburgh reported the allegations to the appropriate district attorney and referred the case to their religious order or diocese, which had the responsibility to make a determination about their fitness for ministry.

Finally, the list does not include the names of those individuals who have appeals pending before the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania regarding their constitutional rights in relation to the Grand Jury report. Their rights and the work of the Supreme Court need to be respected. If the Supreme Court orders that their names be restored in the report, they will also be added to the Diocese of Pittsburgh list.

I assure you that we will continue to turn over all allegations to appropriate law enforcement.

Given that the Grand Jury report covers a period of 70 years, I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude for the faithful service of more than 1,700 diocesan priests who have served the people of our diocese with dedication and distinction.

For those who are reviewing the Grand Jury report, I want to call your attention to the Response the diocese submitted. Our Response is not intended to be a criticism of the Grand Jury. Instead, it is intended to correct, in part, factual inaccuracies and omissions.

I want to close by speaking directly to victims. Again, I express my sorrow for the pain you have suffered at the hands of someone who was supposed to care for your soul. My apology comes with our sincere effort to improve, and our continuing invitation to meet with you and assist you with resources for healing.

As I began my remarks, so do I close:

- To those of you who have in any way been the victim of any abuse, sexual or otherwise, whether as a child or as an adult, or as a parent, or a sibling, or friend who shared the pain of that someone you love -- I ask you, the Church asks you for forgiveness...
- For whatever ways any representative of the Church has hurt, offended, dismissed, ignored any one of you, -- I ask you, the Church asks you for forgiveness...
- With all the love in my heart and with all the sincerity in my soul, you can be assured that I will continue to do all that I can to restore your trust in the Church and to work together with you to reflect the very love, compassion and mercy of Jesus Himself, in and through the Church....

Thank you.