



Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

August 4, 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As you have seen in the media, a Grand Jury report will be released recounting child sexual abuse by clergy and others in our diocese and in the dioceses of Allentown, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, and Scranton. Permit me the opportunity to prepare you for the public release of this report and also to put it into some context. I want you to know that our diocese has cooperated with the Attorney General's Office and the Grand Jury. We have not attempted to block the report.

You can expect that the Grand Jury's report, once released, will be a sad and tragic description of events that occurred within the Church. With its release, I continue to be deeply concerned about the victims and the ongoing pain and suffering they endure. We need to continue to pray with and for them, and to offer assistance wherever possible.

Since becoming your bishop 11 years ago, I have met many times with victims of sexual abuse and their families. I have witnessed the lasting damage that abuse has caused in their lives. I, together with the dedicated staff of our diocese, continue in our efforts to support their emotional and spiritual care to help repair the harm they suffered.

The Grand Jury investigation covered the span of over seventy years. It is important to know that nearly 90 percent of all reported incidents of abuse in our own diocese occurred before 1990. For over 30 years, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has had policies in place to respond quickly and compassionately when victims of abuse have come forward.

We respond to allegations today very differently than decades ago. When a credible allegation is made against a member of the clergy, we take immediate action by removing the priest or deacon from ministry, and by sharing that news with you, the faithful. In addition, we inform law enforcement of all allegations of abuse.

We have rigorous policies to protect children. If you have been employed by the Church or have sought to volunteer in your parish or school, you have experienced our efforts to protect children through training programs and background checks. These steps have made a difference and continue to do so. More people in the Church are coming to better understand child abuse, and they are able to recognize the signs of possible abuse and the need to report it.

In the Diocese of Pittsburgh today, I can assure you that there is no priest or deacon in public ministry against whom a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse has been made.

With the impending publication of the Grand Jury report, I now feel it is also necessary to publicly release the names of clergy from the Diocese of Pittsburgh against whom an allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor has been made. We will release this list when the Grand Jury report is published out of respect for the work of the Grand Jury and the process outlined by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. It is my hope that doing so will further strengthen the trust that you, the faithful, have placed in our diocese and in the ministry of our priests and deacons. In the past I truly believed that turning these names over to local law enforcement was appropriate and sufficient action. However, the conclusion of the Grand Jury investigation requires a higher level of transparency on our part.

Every act of child sexual abuse is horrific, no matter how long ago it occurred. I ask that you join with me in praying for all victims and for their loved ones. If you know someone who is a victim, support them emotionally and spiritually. And if they have not already shared with us their experience of abuse, please encourage them to come forward.

I am also concerned that your faith may be tested. I ask, as you reflect on this report, that you stay close to God in prayer. And finally, I am concerned about the well-being of the vast majority of dedicated priests and deacons who bear the shame and the pain of the worst deeds of their peers. I ask that you pray for them, as well.

Thank you for receiving my message as it is shared with you from my heart. The tragedy of child sexual abuse affects us all. As difficult as this moment is, my prayer is that the agony of Jesus on the cross will be our beacon of hope. May we as a Church always seek to be who we are called to be – the Body of Christ.

Grateful for our belief that "Nothing Is Impossible with God," I am

Your Brother in Christ,

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh