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A Public Accounting

There cannot be forgiveness without confession and repentance. There cannot be healing without acknowledgement of pain and care for injuries. There cannot be trust without truth.

Since the mid-80s, the Archdiocese has worked to take an aggressive stance in dealing with child sexual abuse. We have a long history of removing priests and others accused of misconduct. Prior to this disclosure, allegations of child sexual abuse by 28 priests who served in the Archdiocese have been made public. But as with society, our understanding of this crime and sin has evolved over the years. In years past, insufficient understanding led to insufficient action.

Prior to the early 1980s, child sexual abuse was often seen as a moral weakness, and psychologists sometimes attributed this deviant behavior to problems with alcohol. During this time period, some priests were returned to active ministry following forced leaves of absence, which, in many cases, included treatment.

Often, medical professionals recommended or approved a return to ministry after treatment, believing the sickness that leads to the evil of child sexual abuse to be a treatable mental illness. And, through the late 1980s, the Church, focusing on forgiveness, incorrectly based its policies on this mistaken advice - and often restricted priests to ministries where they would not interact with children, such as office or hospital work. Over the years, we have come to the conclusion that treatment provides no certainty, and any risks with children are too great. The list that follows illustrates how our approach has evolved.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops instituted the Church's first national policy concerning child sexual abuse, recommending many of the elements contained in the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People passed this year in Dallas - but it was voluntary and did not include zero tolerance. The Archdiocese of Baltimore implemented and enforced this policy, but it still left room for improvement, and, unfortunately, some Dioceses did not adopt it.

In accordance with State law, since the 1980s, we have reported cases of child sexual abuse to civil authorities in which the victim was still a minor. Until 1993, we encouraged adult survivors of abuse to report abuse directly to the authorities, but often did not report ourselves, allowing victims to control their cases. Since 1993, we have reported all instances where there is reason to believe a child has been sexually abused - including those in which the victim has since reached adulthood, and those where the alleged perpetrator has died.

The Dallas Charter is very clear on what it means by child sexual abuse: "Sexual abuse [includes] contacts or interactions between a child and an adult when the child is being used as an object of sexual gratification for the adult. A child is abused whether or not this activity involves explicit force, whether or not it involves....physical contact, whether or not it is initiated by the child, and whether or not there is discernible harmful outcome."

While this definition is broader than that contained in civil laws concerning child sexual abuse, the Archdiocese will act to remove those who are credibly accused under this standard. We will allow civil authorities to make determinations of what is legal or illegal. We will allow the medical establishment to determine what constitutes mental illness or health. The Church will focus on right and wrong. Child sexual abuse, regardless of any other factor, is evil. Those who commit child sexual abuse may not continue in any form of ministry.

Attachment A lists priests and brothers who have served in the Archdiocese and, upon a review of our existing records, have been accused of child sexual abuse. It contains some individuals who have admitted abusing children, as well as individuals who have denied any improper contact with children. A number of the allegations cannot be corroborated. In a few instances, allegations have been excluded from the list when an investigation has concluded that the facts do not indicate that sexual abuse occurred.

All victims who contact the Archdiocese are offered counseling and assistance with healing. Every allegation has been reported to the appropriate civil authorities. No one on this list is serving in any ministry in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

In addition to the 57 individuals named, there are 26 priests and brothers about whom we have received reports of sexual abuse after their death. Of these, 14 were priests of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and 12 were religious priests or brothers. Two of these allegations relate to alleged abuse that occurred in the 1930s. The remainder of events occurred in the 1940s through 1960s, with the exception of one allegation each relating to events in the 1970s and the early 1980s. In 20 of these cases, a single person has made a posthumous allegation. In six cases, two or more individuals have made such reports.

We have reported each case involving these 26 priests and brothers to the appropriate civil authorities, and have offered counseling assistance to each victim-survivor who has come forward. We have no reason to disbelieve the victims, however, we have determined not to disclose these names since we cannot question the accused. They are no longer a danger to children, and the Lord is now judging them. We pray that any other victims will come forward, so that we may apologize and offer help.

The priests currently serving in the Archdiocese's parishes are representative of the Church. As the parishioners who make up this Archdiocese know well, they are dedicated to service. We have no reason to believe that any among them has committed the crime and sin of child sexual abuse. I, and my fellow bishops in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, strongly support our priests. They are the heart and soul of the Church. They guide the faithful in finding and serving God. I pray that these men are not tainted by the evil acts of others, or by our failure as Church leaders to understand and deal openly and aggressively with the crisis of child sexual abuse.

Attachment B is an accounting of all Archdiocesan financial resources expended since 1987 due to child sexual abuse by clergy - including settlements, psychiatric counseling and treatment costs, legal fees, and ordinary medical and living expenses incurred by priests removed from ministry due to abuse.

Transparency must be an ongoing process. Our accounting of clergy accused of child sexual abuse and the related financial impact is based on what we know today. Both the list of accused clergy and expenses may change based on information that comes to light in the months and years ahead. And when we learn more, we will report more.