

## MEMO

**Date:** February 24, 2004  
**To:** Priests in the Diocese of San Diego  
**From:** Bishop Robert H. Brom  
**Re:** **A Report on Sexual Abuse by Priests in the Diocese of San Diego**



As promised, I am hereby presenting a report, based on the data available to us, regarding the problem of sexual abuse by priests in the Diocese of San Diego from January 1, 1950, through December 31, 2003. This period of 54 years includes the first 29 years of what became in 1978 the Diocese of San Bernardino.

- Slightly over 2000 priests have been in ministry here
- Sixty priests have been accused of the crime of sexual abuse, 4 of whom are believed to have been falsely accused and another 14 without substantiation.
- Of the 42 priests with allegations that have been substantiated or are credible, 21 are deceased, and 21 have left or been removed from ministry.
- A total of 128 people have made allegations of sexual abuse against these 42 priests. Twenty of these priests have only one reported allegation against them; 7 priests account for 100 alleged victims (78% of the total).
- A breakdown of alleged victims according to when their abuse began is as follows:
  - 1950 to 1959 - 31
  - 1960 to 1969 - 33
  - 1970 to 1979 - 46
  - 1980 to 1989 - 15
  - 1990 to 1999 - 3
  - 2000 to 2003 - 0

Accurate financial information in reference to cases of sexual abuse is available only from 1990 to December 31, 2003. For this period, there have been the following expenditures:

- **Pastoral Care**

Diocesan assistance to victims/families	\$ 324,170.71
Diocesan assistance to accused priests	\$ 208,896.12

• **Legal Settlements**

Diocesan payments	\$ 1,034,250.00
Insurance payments	\$ 2,681,630.00
Religious Order payments	\$ 25,000.00
Offender payments	\$ 50,000.00
Diocesan legal fees and expenses	\$ 42,562.15
Insurance coverage for legal fees	\$ 123,119.41

In the eighteen months previous to January 1, 2004, we pastorally addressed cases involving 40 alleged victims of sexual abuse by priests. In more than half of these cases, financial compensation for the harm suffered was requested and granted. The diocesan portion of these settlements, indicated above, has been set up as a diocesan accounts receivable. This is to make clear that the diocese will not use for settlements those contribution designated for the mission of the Church. In due time, the Diocesan Finance Council will determine how to reimburse the diocese for settlements already made and cover as well the diocesan portion of future settlements.

We have litigation pending as a result of legislation which, for the year 2003, eliminated in California the statute of limitations for sexual abuse claims. At the present time, however, we still are not certain of the exact number of accused priests or alleged victims. This is because a number of lawsuits filed against the diocese have not yet been served. From the data available, we can only estimate that there are lawsuits involving approximately 40 priests and about 100 alleged victims. Insofar as possible, these are included in the figures given above.

Once again, I continue to offer the opportunity of pastoral resolution to victims of sexual abuse without regard to the status of pending litigation. I am aware that the financial component is at times an important concern, but it should not be overemphasized. Far more important is the healing being accomplished through counseling and the reconciliation realized through apologies offered to victims for the serious failures they experienced by Church ministers. Victims who have accepted our pastoral outreach confirm that it better respects faith and family and is very effective in accomplishing healing and reconciliation.

We are implementing in every way the *Charter for the Protection of Youth and Young People*. According to our *Policy on Sexual Abuse by Church Ministers*:

- The Diocese of San Diego is committed to prevent sexual abuse and to maintain a safe environment for children and young people.
- The Diocese of San Diego is committed to deal appropriately with allegations and cases of sexual abuse.
- The Diocese of San Diego is committed, above all, to reach out with pastoral concern and care to victims of sexual abuse and their families, and to promote healing and reconciliation with them.