

Letter from Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

August 14, 2018

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you know, there has been much media attention leading up to today's announcement from the State Attorney General regarding six dioceses throughout the Commonwealth. The content is difficult to read and painful for all of us – most especially survivors and their loved ones. The Church in Philadelphia continues to express regret and sorrow for that pain and remains committed to providing support and assistance aimed at healing.

It is important to note that the Archdiocese was not subject to the grand jury investigation and is not part of this report. However, our own past experience with local grand juries in 2005 and 2011 is likely to be referenced in news coverage.

Over the past 15 years the Archdiocese has prioritized its responsibility to create safe environments for the children and young people entrusted to its care.

Prevention of abuse is part of our Church's culture and our zero-tolerance policy dictates our aggressive response, which includes immediately notifying law enforcement regarding any allegation of sexual abuse or other criminal activity.

The Church has accepted responsibility for the abuse that occurred within its ranks – no matter when the abuse occurred. In that vein, it's important to note that the vast majority of reports received by the Archdiocesan Office of Investigations since its inception concern behavior that was alleged to have occurred several decades ago.

There have been less than half a dozen allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by Archdiocesan clergy related to the period 2005-present day. Of that handful, all of which were reported to law enforcement, one allegation was substantiated. That priest was immediately removed from ministry by the Archdiocese when it learned of the allegation and he was later convicted on Federal child pornography charges.

During this same time period, approximately 100,000 Archdiocesan clergy, staff, and volunteers have received Safe Environment and Mandatory Reporter training programs to help them recognize, respond to, and report suspected abuse.

Those facts, along with the significant support we provide survivors of abuse and their families, are rarely acknowledged or reported. Last year alone our Archdiocese committed \$1.7 million in these efforts. To provide transparency and to further assist in healing, we've published the names of all clergy with substantiated claims of abuse against them—both living and deceased—on our [Archdiocesan website](#) for several years.

Please know of my gratitude for your generous dedication to our Church and her mission. Everyone in our Archdiocese plays a part in the ongoing efforts to protect God's children. I have attached our official statement regarding the grand jury report. It illustrates the extent of

our commitment to rooting out the societal evil of child abuse as well as assisting survivors and their loved ones.

In addition, I encourage you to view a newly established website <https://tinyurl.com/AOPPledgetoProtect>. It tells the story of where we have been, where we are, and where we are headed in our work to create safe environments and support survivors.

In a world where the evil of child sexual abuse infiltrates every facet of society, I know that our work to combat it will go on – permanently.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Philadelphia



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**STATEMENT FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
REGARDING THE RELEASE OF THE REPORT OF THE
40TH STATEWIDE GRAND JURY**

The Attorney General's investigation and subsequent grand jury report involving six Catholic dioceses in Pennsylvania has been broad and the content has been difficult to read. The material is painful for everyone, most especially survivors of sexual abuse and their loved ones. We deeply regret their pain and remain focused on a path toward healing.

It is important to note that the Archdiocese was not subject to the grand jury investigation and is not part of this report. However, that fact in no way eases our responsibility and longstanding efforts to ensure the safety of children and families in our Church environments.

For more than 15 years, the Archdiocese, along with the Church at large, has put in place a wide range of reforms to protect young people. We have a zero tolerance policy for clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who engage in abuse of children or misconduct with minors and take immediate action when an accusation is made.

Relevant information can be found at <https://childyouthprotection.org> and <http://archphila.org/archdiocesan-offices/office-of-investigations/>.

Some key points are listed below.

All people working with children, including volunteers, undergo criminal background checks and child abuse clearances.

All AOP clergy, staff and volunteers complete Safe Environment training programs and Mandatory Reporter training programs. Over 110,000 adults have received training to recognize, respond and report abuse since 2003.

All young people in grades K-12 receive age appropriate abuse prevention education.

All employees and volunteers who have contact with children are required to report suspicions of child abuse.

A full-time, professional staff develops policies and trainings based on the law, best practices and the “Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries to clearly define acceptable and unacceptable conduct which apply to all Archdiocesan clergy, staff, volunteers, parents, and members of parish communities.

An active “safe environment program” is pursued within all of our parishes, schools, and youth programs for compliance audits and disseminating information and resources on child abuse prevention. There are 280 designated “Safe Environment Coordinators” diocesan-wide serving parishes, schools and youth ministries.

We encourage the general public to report all suspected child abuse by clergy or anyone participating in an Archdiocesan program to the Commonwealth, local police, and to identified Archdiocesan personnel.

We require our Office of Investigations to handle allegations of misconduct, and every allegation involving minors is reported to law enforcement, logged, and reviewed to determine whether interim restrictions on ministry or employment are required.

We refer allegations against clergy members involving minors, even those solely involving violations of the Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries, to the Archdiocesan Review Board, which functions an independent consultative body to the Archbishop.

We submit to regular audits and the USCCB’s annual report process, which allows independent auditors to evaluate and scrutinize the Archdiocese’s youth protection efforts and response.

These layers of protection, including the engagement of secular professionals and direct work with law enforcement, have resulted in far fewer abuse incidents in the Archdiocese than found in society as a whole.

In addition to our efforts at abuse prevention, the Archdiocese also provides ongoing, significant support for survivors of abuse and their families. We encourage victims to come forward, and we will continue our extensive efforts to help victims of sexual abuse heal.

Studies have now shown that sexual abuse plagues every aspect of our current culture – from sports and public institutions, to the entertainment industry and politics. Prevention comes from training and constant vigilance. In that light, our path will remain focused on ensuring that children and young people are protected, and wrongdoers are reported to law enforcement.

To make a report: To report an allegation of sexual abuse, immediately contact your local law enforcement agency and/or the Archdiocesan Office of Investigations at 1-888-930-9010. Mandated reporters are required to call ChildLine, which is staffed by the

Department of Public Welfare at 1-800-932-0313.

To report a violation of *[The Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries](#)*, contact the Archdiocesan Office for Investigations at 1-888-930-9010.

If you need support or assistance, victim services and referrals are available through the Victim Assistance Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia at 1-888-800-8780 or www.childyouthprotection.org.

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Editor's Note: For further information regarding efforts on the part of the Archdiocese to protect the children and young people entrusted to her care as well as to assist survivors on their journey to healing, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/AOPPledgetoProtect>.