

Our Commitment to Pastoral Support, Healing, Protection and Prevention

“To those victims and their families, we beg forgiveness and assure them that the Catholic Church is working to create a safe environment for young people in our Churches, schools and agencies. It must never be business as usual, but rather a firm commitment of every diocese, parish and school to do all we can to avoid the mistakes of the past and create safeguards for the future.”

– Cardinal O’Malley’s installation homily July 2003



MESSAGE FROM CARDINAL O'MALLEY

My Dear Friends in Christ,

During Pope Francis' historic visit to the United States in September 2015, the Holy Father spoke of his meeting with survivors of sexual abuse by clergy and survivors who suffered abuse in their schools or in their homes. "I hold the stories and the suffering and the sorrow of children who were sexually abused by priests deep in my heart. I remain overwhelmed with shame that men entrusted with the tender care of children violated these little ones and caused grievous harm. I am profoundly sorry. God weeps." Pope Francis has established the importance of zero tolerance with regard to the abuse of children. We are blessed by the Pope's pastoral concern for survivors and their families and for making clear that the protection of children is among the highest priorities of the Church.

At the Mass of my installation as Archbishop in July 2003 I shared: "How we ultimately deal with the present crisis in our Church will do much to define us as Catholics of the future. If we do not flee from the cross of pain and humiliation, if we stand firm in who we are and what we stand for, if we work together, hierarchy, priests, religious and laity, to live our faith and fulfill our mission then, we will be a stronger and a holier Church." I pledged then and reiterate now that the Archdiocese will not forget our responsibility to work towards healing and reconciliation.

To all survivors of clergy sexual abuse, please know of the Holy Father's "gratitude for your immense courage to shine the light of Christ on the evil of the sexual abuse of children." Your witness to the truth, though following from extremely difficult experiences, is a gift of great service to the Church. In the Archdiocese we have instituted comprehensive mandatory child protection policies and procedures for all Church personnel, clergy, religious and laity. Society has learned much from the failings of the Church and our response to this tragedy, we pray that our efforts may contribute to the protection of children in all settings and circumstances. I ask again for forgiveness from those who were harmed by the Church. My hope is that the information which follows may provide some consolation, be helpful for your healing and raise awareness in the wider community of our ongoing commitment to serve survivors.

With the assurance of my prayers for you and all your loved ones,



Archbishop of Boston

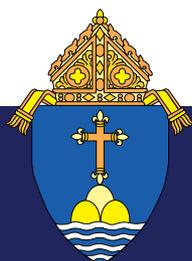


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REPORTING POLICY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

- Since 2002, the Archdiocese has had in place a vigorous policy with respect to disclosing information about clergy accused of abusing minors.
- All allegations of clergy sexual abuse of children are immediately reported to law enforcement.
- Notifications are made to local District Attorney's offices, the Massachusetts Attorney General, and federal law enforcement when appropriate.
- Notifications are made regardless of whether or not the person reporting the abuse is still a minor, whether or not the accused cleric is still alive, and whether or not the allegations have been evaluated as credible.
- If the victim is under the age of 18 at the time of the report, the matter is immediately referred to the Department of Children and Families through the filing of a 51A report.
- The Archdiocese publically discloses when a member of its clergy is removed from active ministry pending an investigation into an allegation of child abuse.
- The Archdiocese publically discloses when a member of its clergy is convicted of sexual abuse of a child as a result of a criminal process or when, after a canonical process, a member of the clergy is removed from the clerical state.



PASTORAL SUPPORT AND CHILD PROTECTION

All persons impacted by sexual abuse of children and young people by clergy are encouraged to contact the Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach at 617-746-5985. Support services are available.

- The Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach (OPSO) was created in 2002. Since then OPSO has met with more than 1000 survivors of clergy abuse.
- Support services are available to both those abused by clergy and their family members who were also impacted.
- Cardinal O'Malley has met with hundreds of survivors of clergy sexual abuse and family members to offer his personal apology.
- Over the last 12 years, the Archdiocese has provided over \$34.6 million dollars to fund counseling, psycho-pharmaceuticals, and other services for survivors and family members.
- Over 300 survivors are receiving therapy with the financial support of OPSO at any given time
- Since 2003, annual background checks have been required for all clergy, religious, educators, employees, and volunteers working in parishes, parish schools, and other church offices. This is done to promote the safety of our children, youth, elderly, and the disabled. More than 50,000 people are screened each year.
- The Archdiocese provides the opportunity for all youth to receive age appropriate training to help keep them safe. Training is provided in religious education classes and school classes through diocesan approved curriculums.
- All clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers who may have contact with children are required to be trained in Protecting God's Children (PGC) which teaches:
 - How to ensure a safe environment for youth at the parish, school, and off site activities.
 - How to recognize and respond to indicators of possible abuse, at church, school, home, or elsewhere in a child's life.
 - How to report concerns about possible abuse, including mandated reporting.
- All clergy, religious, adult employees, and adult volunteers are required to sign the Code of Ministerial Behavior that provides a set of standards for conduct in pastoral situations.

Our education programs are working. Clergy, religious, volunteers and employees are focused on child safety and creating safe environments. Not only are children being kept safe while at church, but children and adults are talking about risks and safety in other settings. Our adult volunteers and employees are helping children stay safe everywhere, including among friends, family, and others. Reports are filed with civil authorities whenever abuse or neglect is suspected, whatever the setting.



RESOLVING CLAIMS

“It is understandable that some may view any effort to discuss the sexual abuse crisis in financial terms as minimizing the severity of the pain and loss caused by clergy sexual abuse. We must never forget the profound suffering survivors, their families and the Catholic community have endured as a result of the tragic crimes perpetrated against children.”

- Cardinal O’Malley OFM, Cap., 2006

Cardinal O’Malley continues to make it a priority to resolve claims of clergy sexual abuse against the Archdiocese of Boston. In the spirit of transparency the Archdiocese annually releases financial figures regarding sexual abuse settlements and related costs. These reports are available at www.BostonCatholic.org. Since Cardinal O’Malley’s installation in 2003, the Archdiocese of Boston has worked to settle approximately one thousand claims of clergy sexual abuse. The approximate costs related to clergy sexual abuse since 2003 is \$215 million. The source of those funds is generated from real estate property sales, rental income and insurance funds. It should be made clear that parish funds, money raised from the Promise for Tomorrow Campaign, the Annual Catholic Appeal, and proceeds from the parish reconfiguration process are not being used to fund settlements.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO SEEK HELP

Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach

Toll Free: 866-244-9603

Local/ 617-746-5985

Office of Child Advocacy

617-746-5994

Office of Background Screening

617-746-5840

Department of Professional Standards & Oversight

617-746-5624

Massachusetts Department of Children and Families

Days: 617-748-2000

Evenings and Weekends: 1-800-792-5200

