



February 26, 2004 - Statement of Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley, Regarding Clergy Sexual Abuse in the Archdiocese of Boston from 1950-2003

In June 2002, in response to the crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States brought on by allegations of clergy sexual abuse of children, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. In this document, the bishops sought to address not only the crimes and sins committed by priests against children, but also the ways bishops responded to allegations made by victims against clergy. The Charter acknowledges that in "the past, secrecy has created an atmosphere that has inhibited the healing process and, in some cases, enabled sexually abusive behavior to be repeated." A National Review Board was established by the USCCB with the task, among others, of producing two reports: [1] a descriptive study, with the full cooperation of our dioceses/eparchies, of the nature and scope of the problem within the Catholic Church in the United States, including such data as statistics on perpetrators and victims and [2] a comprehensive study of the causes and context of the current crisis. Both the first study, undertaken at the request of the Review Board by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and the second report are scheduled to be made public on February 27, 2004.

The fact that the USCCB instituted and participated in these two national studies is itself evidence of positive and hopeful development. Unless and until the scope, causes, and context of the sexual abuse of children by clergy are understood in all their devastating detail, attempts to address it will remain insufficient. Studies such as these, and the attention they engender, serve to help not only our Church but other institutions and the wider society to confront the evil of sexual abuse of children and to work toward ensuring our children's safety. The studies to be released tomorrow demonstrate that the Church is finally and unflinchingly committed to facing this scandal head on and doing all in our power to prevent anything like it from ever happening again.

Since neither of these two national studies will give specifics on any particular dioceses, it is important that we make public to the members of the Church of the Archdiocese of Boston, as well as the wider community, the scope of the issue of sexual abuse of children by clergy in the Archdiocese of Boston that has come to light over the past two years by making public the numbers and statistics relative to the issue from 1950-2003.

As I present this information to the people of the Archdiocese of Boston, I apologize once again to all who have been hurt so grievously by priests and the bishops who were responsible for supervising them. We thank the victim-survivors and their families for courageously coming forward and telling their stories to us and to others. The recent settlements that have been made by the Archdiocese of Boston and the continuing efforts of the persons and agencies of the Archdiocese to seek to assist the survivors and their families in their journey towards healing are concrete acts that express our sincere contrition and repentance for what has happened. While progress has been made, more needs to be done. The Archdiocese is committed to doing everything humanly possible in order to ensure that this never happens again. As Archbishop of Boston, I make that commitment once again, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Church of Boston.

Number of Accused Priests

From 1950 through 2003, a total of 2324 ordained archdiocesan priests were incardinated in the Archdiocese of Boston. This number includes all archdiocesan priests who lived in or served in parishes for any period of time or were involved in pastoral work, such as parishes, hospitals, diocesan schools, etc. This number does not include priests who are members of religious orders or priests from other dioceses (non-incardinated priests) who lived or served in the Archdiocese of Boston during this time.

The numbers reported below relate to accusations of sexual abuse of a minor during the time period 1950 through 2003 by an ordained priest. In that time period, a total of 162 archdiocesan priests were alleged to have sexually abused a minor. The number 162 simply reflects the total number of priests against whom allegations have been received in this time period. It does not mean that a determination criminally, civilly, or canonically, has been made regarding the truth or non-truth of the allegation. The number of accused priests represents approximately 7% of the archdiocesan priests who served from 1950-2003.

Of those 162 priests who have had an allegation made against them, the largest group, 59 priests, were ordained in



the period from 1960 through 1969. Of those priests ordained from 1980 through 2003, a period of over 23 years, a total of 8 priests have had an allegation made against them

Finally, of the 162 priests who have had an allegation made against them, 58 are now deceased.

In addition, during the same time period, three men who served as deacons, 10 non-incardinated priests and 44 religious order priests were alleged to have sexually abused a minor. Since there is no way of knowing with any accuracy the total number of either religious order or non-incardinated priests who worked in Archdiocese of Boston from 1950-2003, no percentage number of accused to general population can be determined as above.

The Number of Victims

From 1950-2003, a total number of 815 people have made an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston. Of these alleged victims, slightly more than half relate to sexual abuse alleged against just 7 archdiocesan priests.

In addition, there were a total of 150 people who have made allegations of some abuse of a minor against a deacon, non-incardinated, or religious order priests.

The Time Frame of Alleged Abuse

The vast majority of allegations involve incidents that are alleged to have occurred within the period from 1965 to 1982. The number of allegations involving sexual abuse during the period from 1983 through 2003 shows a substantial decline in comparison to the prior periods.

(Table does not include incidents where the date could not be determined)

Report Dates

The majority of allegations were reported from January 2002 to December 2003, as can be seen in the following graphic:

(Table does not include incidents where a report date could not be determined)

Settlements Reached

The total amount of money paid by the Archdiocese of Boston through December 2003 in settling sexual abuse claims is \$120.6 million. The total amount recovered from insurance through December 2003 is \$22.3 million.

As I and other archdiocesan officials have frequently stated no money from present parish funds or assets, the annual Catholic Appeal, the Capital Campaign, Catholic schools, Catholic Charities, or any other programs of the Archdiocese of Boston will be used to pay for the costs of the sexual abuse claims. As was widely reported in December, the Archdiocese borrowed \$90 million in order to resolve most of the pending claims. The money that was borrowed will be paid back through money recovered from insurance companies and by the sale of archdiocesan property in Brighton, including the former archbishops' residence.

Concluding Words

One incident of child abuse is too many, one child hurt too much. We must all do everything that we can to make sure that the scourge of child abuse not only within the Church but in the wider society as well is wiped clean from our



midst. The numbers are truly horrific, but they are also telling both in terms of extent of the problem and the time frame in which the magnitude of the problem became known.

I extend to all the Catholics of the Archdiocese of Boston and to all people of good will my sorrow at what has taken place. I take some consolation in the fact that the number of incidents of abuse occurring within the last 20 years seems to have dropped so precipitously.

I find consolation in the ongoing witness and ministry of the vast majority of priests of the Archdiocese of Boston who have remained committed to the ministry of Church and the witness of Christ's love for all in their manner of life. These past few years have not been easy for you, my brothers. The criminal and immoral actions against children by some of our brother priests has tarnished us all. Yet, hundreds of you have faithfully served and continue to serve the people of God in selfless love for others.

Finally, I take great joy in the people of God who comprise the Church of the Archdiocese of Boston. The last two years have been a trial for us all. Our faith has been challenged and sadly some have left the Church in the wake of this scandal. Yet, the vast majority of you have chosen to remain and continue to live the good life of faith. Let us continue to pray and reach out to those who have in any way been hurt by this scandal. Please pray for me, your bishop, as I do for you, as well as for the victim-survivors and their families and the good priests of the Archdiocese. May we all continue through our actions and words to spread the Good News of Christ found most fully in the life and teaching of the Catholic Church. May God bless you all.

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