



**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH**
NEWS

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For Release Thursday, November 8, 2018

DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH TO ESTABLISH SURVIVORS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM

The Diocese of Pittsburgh is establishing an independently administered survivors' compensation program to aid those who suffered abuse at the hands of Catholic clergy. The specifics of the program will be announced by the end of the year. This is the second such program created by the diocese. The first was established in 2007.

This initiative follows on the joint statement of the Bishops of Pennsylvania on September 21, 2018 in support of an independent compensation program for survivors of child sexual abuse by clergy. Bishop Zubik will soon be taking part in listening sessions throughout the Diocese that will help inform the details of this program, as well as other actions that will support the healing of survivors and the protection of children in the Church. The dates and locations of the listening sessions were announced yesterday.

These efforts are taking place in parallel with an ongoing, comprehensive review initiated over the summer of all Diocesan practices related to the protection of children and young people headed by Shay Bilchik, an expert on the prevention and prosecution of child sexual abuse, whose report we await. This is a review of our current practices and reforms that have been instituted and improved upon over 30 years. Mr. Bilchik is the former president of the Child Welfare League of America and is the Founder and Director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. He also has extensive experience as a state prosecutor in Florida specializing in children's issues and was the administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice, where his portfolio included child protection.

"The survivors' compensation program we are working to establish will be designed to create the best opportunity for recovery and healing to survivors," Bishop Zubik said. "They continue to suffer as a result of their abuse and this program will help to provide for their ongoing needs."

One purpose of the new program, like the previous effort in 2007, is to compensate survivors who would otherwise be barred by the statute of limitations in civil court.

No money used for this fund will come from *Our Campaign for The Church Alive!*, Catholic Charities, parishes, schools or any other funds designated for a specific use by the donor. Nor have such funds been used in the past to compensate victims. While sources for funding needed to establish the program are still being settled upon, the program will ensure transparency and the disclosure of all allegations to law enforcement.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh also supports the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Dioceses across the Commonwealth in their sincere efforts to assist survivors.

"It is my hope that a program to compensate survivors of abuse by clergy will continue to aid in their healing and the healing of the Church, the Body of Christ," Bishop Zubik said.

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