

Bishop Malooly responds to questions regarding the Pennsylvania grand jury report

August 21, 2018 --- (Wilmington, DE) --- In the wake of the grand jury report based on a two-year investigation by the state's attorney general into sexual abuse claims in six Pennsylvania dioceses, bishops and dioceses are responding to new questions regarding the crimes and sins of priests in the past and how the Church protects children.

"Here in the Diocese of Wilmington, we have demonstrated a continuing commitment to preventing sexual abuse," the Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly, Bishop of the Diocese of Wilmington, said. "We are grateful that the Diocese of Wilmington has not had a reported instance of the sexual abuse of a child by anyone in diocesan or parish ministry in over 25 years. Our policies, procedures, training, and continuing commitment makes our churches and schools safe places for children."

In April 2002, diocesan officials met with the Delaware Attorney General and disclosed all reports of abuse the diocese had ever received. In August of 2002, the 10-member Diocesan Lay Review Board was formed to review allegations of sexual abuse made against priests, deacons or other church employees or volunteers and make recommendations regarding fitness for ministry of those accused. Allegations also are reported to law enforcement as required by Delaware and Maryland law. Furthermore, in 2006 the Diocese of Wilmington became one of the few dioceses to release to the public, the names of all known diocesan clergy regarding whom there are admitted, corroborated or otherwise substantiated allegations of sexual abuse. For the last ten years, that list of names has been posted on the diocesan website.

The diocesan safe-environment program, *For the Sake of God's Children*, which is overseen by Mr. Michael Connelly, a retired Commander of the Delaware State Police Criminal Investigation Division, has been widely praised and used as a model for other diocesan programs. Because of this and diocesan leadership's continued vigilance and commitment to assure the safety of young people, the Diocese of Wilmington has been found to be in compliance in all audits including its first audit in 2004.

"I join Pope Francis in his call for us to accompany and pray for survivors, to strengthen safeguarding measures and to end a culture where abuse is covered up," Bishop Malooly added.

The Catholic Diocese of Wilmington was established in 1868 and comprises 56 parishes, 18 missions and 36 schools serving the State of Delaware and the nine counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore. The diocese is in the midst of its year-long 150th anniversary celebration that will conclude on March 3, 2019.

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