



**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
PITTSBURGH**  
NEWS

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**For Immediate Release**

**BISHOP DAVID ZUBIK RESPONDS TO THE RELEASE OF THE GRAND JURY REPORT  
INVESTIGATING SEXUAL ABUSE BY CLERGY IN PENNSYLVANIA**

PITTSBURGH—At a news conference shortly after the release of the “Report of the 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury,” Bishop David Zubik of the Diocese of Pittsburgh expressed his concern for victims of child sexual abuse by clergy, spoke of 30 years of diocesan efforts to end and prevent such abuse, and pledged to take any steps needed to strengthen those efforts.

“Ever since I first met victims of clergy child sexual abuse in 1988, I have seen the immense pain that this crime causes to its victims, to their loved ones and to the heart of Jesus,” Bishop Zubik said.

“I have cried with them and for them over the damage done to them and their families by men whose lives should have been committed to protecting their souls from harm. I dedicate myself to helping them and to doing everything possible to prevent such abuse from happening again.”

Bishop Zubik also offered an apology for the instances when the Church did not respond effectively to victims.

“We cannot bury our heads in the sand,” Bishop Zubik said. “Swift and firm responses to allegations should have started long before they did.”

While apologies are important, he said, “it is not enough. Continued action is necessary.” He then reviewed many actions that the Diocese of Pittsburgh has taken over three decades to end child sexual abuse and respond to victims.

The bishop stated that at least 90 percent of all reported child sexual abuse by clergy in the Diocese of Pittsburgh occurred prior to 1990.

“The Diocese of Pittsburgh today is not the Church that is described in the Grand Jury Report. It has not been for a long time. Over the course of the last 30 years, we have made significant changes to how we prevent abuse and report allegations,” Bishop Zubik said.

He continued that “there is no priest or deacon in public ministry today in the Diocese of Pittsburgh with a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse against him.”

Bishop Zubik outlined some of the steps that the Diocese of Pittsburgh has taken over 30 years to remove offenders from ministry, offer assistance to victims and protect minors from future abuse.

Among them are:

- The curriculum at seminaries has been overhauled to better prepare men for a healthy celibate lifestyle.
- Beginning in 1989, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has engaged an Independent Review Board to address allegations of child sexual abuse.
- Since 1993, a Diocesan Assistance Coordinator has met with victims and continues to respond to their needs.
- The Diocese of Pittsburgh offers psychological counseling for victims and their families with the licensed therapist of their choice.
- Since 1993, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has encouraged victims to contact civil authorities and since 2002 the diocese has committed itself to do the same.
- The Diocese of Pittsburgh has conducted child protection workshops and online training for more than 70,000 clergy, employees and volunteers in its churches, schools and institutions.

Bishop Zubik also described actions that the Diocese of Pittsburgh is taking to ensure that its efforts to prevent and address child sexual abuse remain strong.

- The Diocese of Pittsburgh has engaged an expert on the prevention and prosecution of child sexual abuse to thoroughly review our practices and make recommendations for improvement. Shay Bilchik, a Research Professor at Georgetown University, is the former president of the Child Welfare League of America. He has extensive experience as a state prosecutor in Florida specializing in children's issues. He was also administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice, where his portfolio included child protection. He has already begun a preliminary review.
- The Diocese of Pittsburgh has created a position and will hire an experienced professional to actively monitor clergy who have been removed from ministry following allegations of child sexual abuse.
- The Diocese of Pittsburgh has posted on its website, [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org), a list of 83 diocesan priests against whom there have been allegations of sexual abuse of minors, including some that the Grand Jury chose not to publish. In its report on Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Grand Jury named 90 priests and religious brothers as offenders. Of that number, 68 are priests of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and 22 are either priests of other dioceses or priests or brothers of religious orders. During the 70 years that the Grand Jury report covers, more than 1,700 diocesan priests have served in the Diocese of Pittsburgh who did not have an allegation of child sexual abuse made against them.

Regarding specific allegations about the Diocese of Pittsburgh in the Grand Jury report, Bishop Zubik referred reporters and the public to the official response and statement that the diocese filed with the Office of the Attorney General. Those are attached to the Grand Jury report. They are also at [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org) along with other explanatory documents.

Bishop Zubik ended his press conference with a message for victims.

“Again, I express my sorrow for the pain you have suffered at the hands of someone who was supposed to care for your soul. My apology comes with our sincere effort to improve, and our continuing invitation to meet with you and assist you with resources for healing,” he said.

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