



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
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NEWS

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Statement of Bishop David Zubik One Year After the Grand Jury Report

It has been one year since the release of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report on child sexual abuse by clergy, and the Church is profoundly indebted to those courageous victims/survivors who have helped us grow in understanding of the damage caused by sexual abuse and of how the Church community can offer them understanding and support. We are grateful, and humbled, by the victims/survivors who have reached out to help us help them. It is my prayer that all victims/survivors will feel welcome and have a sense of belonging in our parishes, to whatever extent they desire to be involved in the Church.

My pastoral letter *The Church Healing*, outlined actions for a renewed commitment to healing of victims/survivors, financial transparency, accountability, ongoing formation for clergy and continued listening. All of those steps are either completed or in motion.

As we anticipated, more victims/survivors have come forward since the report, which we have encouraged them to do so that we can help them.

The vast majority of reported cases continue to be about events that occurred decades ago. One reason that few abuse cases occurred after 1990 is that we have continually improved our abuse prevention efforts. Shay Bilchik, founder and director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University has conducted an extensive evaluation of the diocese's policies and practices in this area. His overall conclusion is that "the Diocese of Pittsburgh has worked hard in making the diocese an unwelcoming place for child predators."

A video of his conclusions is on the [diocesan website](#), as is his [executive summary](#).

This year has been a time of sorrow for the harm done to people at the hands of clergy who were expected to be trusted spiritual leaders. It has also been a time for the heart of the Church to deepen its understanding of what victims/survivors have endured, and to reach out in new ways to help them heal.

Pittsburgh is a resilient region, with a unique spirit and sense of community. People draw together to see each other through hard times and come out stronger. Today, we look to the Church of the future, the faith community we want today's children and their children experience. My faith is in God. But I also have faith in the Church of Pittsburgh: faith that our community can move forward in unity and with hope, learning from the past, protecting the weakest among us, holding each other accountable and continuing to fulfill the mission that Jesus gave to us.