

FINANCIAL COSTS RELATED TO SEXUAL ABUSE BY CLERGY DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

In his pastoral letter dated March 6, 2019, *The Church Healing*, Bishop David Zubik promised that the Diocese of Pittsburgh would publish information regarding the amounts that the Diocese of Pittsburgh has spent on costs related to child sexual abuse by clergy.

“The ultimate impact of child sexual abuse is ongoing suffering endured by the victims/survivors – the toll taken on their faith and their capacity to trust and to love,” Bishop Zubik said as he released the information. “Catholics and the public have a right to know what the Church has done to respond, and to see that we have sought for many years to provide assistance to victims.”

The information includes:

- The total amount of victims’ compensation through June 2019. By January 1, 2020, this will be updated with information from the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program, whose work with compensation for victims/survivors is ongoing.
- The legal fees incurred by the diocese related to clergy sexual abuse.
- An average annual cost of support that the diocese is canonically required to provide to clergy who have been removed from ministry due to a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse, but who cannot be dismissed from the clerical state.

The specific information is as follows:

Q. How much money has the Diocese of Pittsburgh spent to help victims/survivors of child sexual abuse by priests?

A. Documented payments to assist victims/survivors are approximately \$7 million. That includes \$4.7 million in legal settlements since the first such settlement on record in 1991. The largest of those payments was \$1.25 million, distributed among 32 victims/survivors by an independent arbitrator in 2007 and was announced publicly at that time.

This total also includes \$2.3 million in other assistance to victims/survivors – primarily for counseling – since 2003. Amounts paid prior to 2003 are not available, but it has been diocesan policy since 1986 to assist victims/survivors with counseling.

Q. What legal fees have been incurred by the Diocese of Pittsburgh related to clergy sexual abuse?

A. The Diocese of Pittsburgh has incurred a total of \$3.8 million in legal fees related to clergy sexual abuse. Of this amount, \$3.5 million has been incurred since the diocese received the grand jury subpoena in September 2016. In a policy that goes back more than 30 years, the Diocese of Pittsburgh does not pay for the defense of individual clergy against criminal charges.

Q. How much has the Diocese of Pittsburgh paid, as required by canon law, to cover basic living expenses of priests who were removed from ministry due to substantiated allegations of child sexual abuse, but who cannot be dismissed from the clerical state?

A. In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, sustenance payments, including health care benefits, have averaged an annual aggregate total of \$315,000. Of that amount, approximately 60 percent relates to health care benefits. These sustenance payments total less than half the salary of a priest in good standing.

The worldwide law of the Church – canon law – requires the diocese to supply basic needs for priests who have been removed from ministry due to substantiated allegations of abuse, but who cannot be dismissed from the clerical state (involuntarily laicized) due to age, illness or canonical restriction as determined by the Holy See.

Q. Where did the diocese get the money for assistance to victims, legal expenses and sustenance payments?

A. All of the financial payments and legal fees related to sexual abuse were funded through the Diocese of Pittsburgh Insurance Program. None of the money for these payments has come from *Our Campaign for the Church Alive!*, Catholic Charities or from any other funds designated by the donor for a specific purpose.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh Insurance Program is a self-insurance program that covers health, property and casualty claims. The vast majority of the program covers health care for diocesan, parish and school employees and property-related claims for parishes, schools and other diocesan institutions. Only about 2.5 percent has been used for sexual abuse claims.

Q. What else is the Diocese of Pittsburgh doing to provide financial assistance to victims/survivors of child sexual abuse by its clergy?

A. In late 2018, the diocese announced the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP). Information about the program is available at www.PittsburghDioceseIRCP.com. The aggregate amount of payments to victims/survivors will be published by January 1, 2020, following the completion of the program. Recipients will not be identified.

No funds for the IRCP will come from *Our Campaign for the Church Alive!*, Catholic Charities or any other funds designated for a specific use by the donor. Nor have such funds been used in the past to compensate victims.