

A Statement on the Motion filed by the Maryland Attorney General Regarding the Archdiocese's Historic Handling of Allegations of Abuse by Ministers of the Church

On Thursday, the Maryland Office of the Attorney General filed a motion in court seeking permission to publicly release a report on his office's four-year investigation of the Archdiocese's handling of abuse allegations dating back to the 1940's. The information contained in the motion was deeply troubling and painful, especially for those harmed, as well as for the laity and the many good priests, deacons, and religious who have faithfully served in our Archdiocese.

Archbishop Lori acknowledged this pain in a letter sent Thursday evening to the people and clergy of the Archdiocese. In it, expressed deep remorse and shame as he apologized to victim-survivors for the suffering they endured and for the Church's past failure to protect them and to respond appropriately to allegations of abuse it received.

The Archbishop also noted that the motion could cause confusion about the current response by the Archdiocese to allegations of child sexual abuse, given that conclusions drawn from historic events in the motion, while a continued source of shame and remorse, do not reflect the Archdiocese's current and decades-long strong pastoral response and handling of allegations of abuse.

He went on to note that for decades, the Archdiocese has fully complied with child protection efforts and laws, including mandatory reporting of all allegations of abuse to law enforcement, permanent bans of any employee or volunteer credibly accused of abuse; pastoral outreach to those harmed, and open communication about newly received credible allegations of abuse, including through the list of credibly accused priests posted on the archdiocesan website since 2002.

Finally, the Archbishop acknowledged that the Attorney General's motion may reopen wounds or feel as if it is an inadequate or incomplete account of justice, and offered prayers that it brings some measure of healing of the deep wounds caused by the scourge of abuse in the life of the Church.

I invite you to join me in adding the prayers of our parish to those of the Archbishop and our fellow Catholics in the Archdiocese as we seek to heal our wounded Church.

Fr. Jerry Francik

Sacred Heart Parish

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