

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office of the Archbishop



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City released a nationwide social science research study, commissioned by the U.S. Bishops, on clerical sexual abuse of minors. The John Jay Study is a quantitative analysis based on confidential data gathered from almost every diocese, eparchy, and religious order in the U.S. on sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy from 1950 to 2002. The data will be crucial in searching for the causes of clerical sexual abuse and in preventing it in the future. This is the study's purpose. A report by the National Review Board providing context for the John Jay data will also be released today.

Officials of the Archdiocese have already published basic data in two reports covering the periods 1950 to 1992 and 1993 to 2002. This information has been updated through December 31, 2003, and is shown on the attached information sheet.

Archdiocesan records reflect that 2,513 archdiocesan priests served in the Archdiocese of Chicago between 1950 and 2003. The Archdiocese has found reason to suspect that, during these 53 years, sexual misconduct with a minor occurred in 142 cases involving 55 Archdiocesan priests, about 2 percent of archdiocesan priests. Of the 55 priests, 13 are deceased, 22 have resigned from the priesthood and 20 are withdrawn from ministry. None is engaged in any public ministry. All cases have been reported to the public authorities.

Money spent because of clerical sexual abuse includes \$26.9 million for victim assistance, settlements and support in the period 1950-2003. Beginning in 1992, the year the Bernardin Commission established procedures for dealing with clerical sexual misconduct, through December 31, 2003, \$5.9 million was spent for treatment and monitoring of priests, and \$5.9 million for legal expenses. Of the \$5.9 million spent on legal fees, \$1.3 million was spent to defend a priest and a school principal judged to be innocent by a civil jury.

The Archdiocese of Chicago, complying with the definition of "allegation" supplied by the John Jay Study, reported for the study all recorded notifications of clerical sexual misconduct with minors, whether or not they resulted in any investigation or whether there was reasonable cause to suspect abuse had occurred.

Since 1992, the Archdiocese of Chicago has addressed allegations of abuse of minors and promoted healing of victims through an Assistance Ministry office, an independent Review Board, and a regular process for reporting abuse allegations to the civil authorities and the public. More recently, the Archdiocese created an Office for the Protection of Children and Youth. It oversees child abuse training programs and background screenings of over

50,000 employees and volunteers. These measures have allowed us to reach out to victims and parish communities, to create safe environments for children and to remove from ministry any priest for whom there was reasonable cause to suspect that sexual misconduct with a minor had occurred. All of these initiatives will continue in our seminaries, schools, parishes and ministry offices.

The bishops of the United States have kept the promises they made during and following their June, 2002, Dallas meeting. All offending priests have been removed from ministry; an independent study was undertaken to understand the extent and causes of clerical misconduct; and policies and procedures have been put in place in every diocese in the United States to deal with abuse allegations, to insure the safety of children and to communicate openly with the public. Most important of all, the care of victims has been formalized and will remain high on the agenda of the Church.

The publication of these results reminds us that some priests betrayed the trust placed in them by Christ, by the children He loves, and by families. Church leaders who failed to act on their behalf only added to the harm done. I again sincerely apologize to the victims and to their families for the anguish they have endured. I offer once again an invitation to anyone who has experienced sexual abuse by a priest or deacon to bring this information to our attention by contacting the Office of Professional Responsibility at 1-800-994-6200.

The consequences of these failures have deeply affected the entire Catholic community. I know that many of you are angered and embarrassed, as am I. We can learn from the transgressions of the past, however, and make as sure as we can that no other child or young person goes through what those who have been victims continue to suffer.

You are always in my prayers. Please keep me in yours.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis Cardinal George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago