

DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

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Diocese of Greensburg Announces Comprehensive Reconciliation Initiative

GREENSBURG — The Diocese of Greensburg announced details of a Comprehensive Reconciliation Initiative to help survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The initiative includes a Survivors' Compensation program, an opportunity for survivors to have personal interaction with an objective program administrator, as well as counseling, spiritual guidance and pastoral care for anyone impacted by clergy abuse in the Diocese of Greensburg.

Bishop Edward C. Malesic, made the announcement Feb. 27, fulfilling a commitment he made on behalf of the diocese last fall.

The website with information about the program and procedures for submitting claims is at www.dioceseofgreensburg.org or www.commonwealthmediation.com.

Any abuse allegation that has not been previously reported to law enforcement will be reported to ChildLine and the appropriate county District Attorney.

The Survivors' Compensation Program will be administrated independently from the diocese by Paul Finn and Brian Mone of Commonwealth Mediation and Conciliation, Inc., (CMCI), a private dispute resolution company experienced in mediation and arbitration services.

Finn, Mone and their colleagues have successfully overseen similar programs in the Archdiocese of Boston, the Diocese of Fall River (MA), the Diocese of Providence (RI), the Diocese of Springfield (MA), the Diocese of Jackson (MS), the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (WI), as well as in the Horace Mann School (Bronx, NY), the Kamehameha School (Honolulu, HI), and the Rhode Island Station Fire (Providence, RI), Deutsche Bank (New York, NY), and the Big Dig Tunnel Collapse (Boston, MA).

"I want to be sure we do everything possible to assist survivors in the healing process. Their stories, their pain and their anguish have had a tremendous impact on me," Bishop

Malesic said. "This is more than a compensation fund. This is a commitment to listening to and supporting the same people we have failed to protect."

Bishop Malesic said, "All the information we received about Mr. Finn, Mr. Mone and CMCI indicated their interactions with victims are compassionate and comprehensive."

The mediators will be completely independent from the diocese and will offer to meet with every claimant during the process. The Diocese of Greensburg will not participate in the process and will have no input into settlement offers made by CMCI. The total amount of the settlement offer will be determined by criteria established by CMCI alone.

The reconciliation initiative will address the needs of victim survivors regardless of the time frames currently in place for the statute of limitations for civil lawsuits. The expedited process will enable eligible survivors of clergy sexual abuse as a minor to be heard and compensated. The diocese will also continue to provide support, counseling, spiritual guidance and pastoral care.

Claims will be submitted directly to CMCI, which will administer them through in-person meetings with claimants in Pennsylvania at a venue or venues to be determined. Claimants who decline an in-person meeting will still be eligible for compensation. Claimants can participate with or without an attorney and will be able to bring other people with them to their meetings.

Claimants eligible for the process are those who were subject to sexual abuse when they were under the age of 18 by a priest, deacon or seminarian of the Diocese of Greensburg, or by a priest or deacon from another diocese or religious order who had faculties and was in active ministry within the Diocese of Greensburg at the time of the abuse. Claimants eligible are those who have previously identified themselves as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse to the Diocese on or before February 26th, 2019.

The initial claims period of the program will run from Feb. 27 through May 28, 2019. Before July 29, the diocese will decide if any subsequent claims periods will be opened. CMCI will hear all claims and make settlement offers to the claimants within 60 days of the close of the initial claims phase, meaning on or before July 29.

Bishop Malesic reiterated that the program will not use assets from schools or parishes, including the sale of parish or school propriety.

There will be a full disclosure of the diocesan funds used at the close of the claims process.

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