



ARCHDIOCESE
of BALTIMORE

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**STATEMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE THAT IT WILL NOT OPPOSE THE
PUBLIC RELEASE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT**

(Baltimore, MD) - The Archdiocese of Baltimore is committed to transparency. We believe that transparency is necessary to rebuild the trust that has been damaged by evil acts of abuse committed by representatives of the Church and by historic failures of Church leadership to respond adequately to those acts. Transparency should also include a responsible and accurate reporting of events—both events that are shameful for the Church as well as events that demonstrate progress in taking new and important steps to protect children and provide assistance to survivors. The Archdiocese of Baltimore described by the Attorney General's Motion to Disclose last week is not the Archdiocese we are today. The Attorney General said as much in an interview on WYPR yesterday when he was asked whether he thought the coverup was over, responding "To the best of my knowledge, it is. The church changed its policy dramatically in 2002 and the law by that time had mandated reports of child abuse, and the church has since then, as far as we can tell, since then followed the law, reported child sexual abuse/child abuse when it was reported to them."

We are different—different than we were in the past—yet we must be transparent in acknowledging our past. To that end, the Archdiocese of Baltimore will not oppose the public release of the Attorney General's report.

We take this position even though we have deep disagreements with aspects of the Attorney General's Motion, including the implication that the Church in Baltimore has not implemented a strong culture of child protection for the past three decades. However, we recognize that efforts on the part of the Archdiocese to challenge errors and mischaracterizations through legal processes will likely be viewed as an attempt to conceal past failures.

We respect the court process and the laws regarding grand jury materials, and a court must decide whether to grant the Attorney General's request to release the report. If the court approves the release of the report, we will support that decision and will certainly make additional specific information available at that time.

Yesterday, some individuals named in the report but not accused of sexual abuse filed a motion seeking the opportunity to participate in the court process relating to the Attorney General's report. The decision of the Archdiocese not to oppose the release of the report does not mean legal requirements should not be observed, or individuals who may be named in a report should be denied the opportunity to participate.

For that reason, and again acknowledging the transparency required of us in this moment, we state that we support the rights of individuals to participate in the legal process, particularly those named in the report who have not been accused of abuse and who have not been contacted by or given any previous opportunity to respond to the Attorney General. The Archdiocese has obligations to some of those individuals which may include indemnifying legal fees for representation. Such individuals should be heard before the court decides whether to publicly release the Attorney General's report.

The Archdiocese believes that any report should fully recognize the numerous important efforts of the Archdiocese over the past decades to create a culture intolerant of abuse of any kind. We must continue to acknowledge the enormous pain caused by the large number of incidents of child sexual abuse. At the same time, efforts made by the Archdiocese for more than 20 years to protect children and support survivors have dramatically changed our culture of child and youth protection. The Archdiocese of Baltimore has for many decades aggressively removed abusive priests; led the nation in transparency by publishing a lengthy list of priests and brothers accused of abuse and by reporting all allegations of abuse to law enforcement authorities, including directly to the Attorney General's office; screened and trained tens of thousands of volunteers and employees in our parishes and schools; provided counseling assistance and financial settlements to survivors—not because we are legally required, but because it is the right thing to do; and published reports from the respected, professional members of our Independent Review Board who have looked at everything done by the Archdiocese in this area since 1993. The Archdiocese of Baltimore did not always respond to allegations of abuse as we do today, but in the past few decades Archdiocesan lay and clergy officials have worked consistently to develop an ever-stronger culture committed to child protection. The Archdiocese has learned important lessons from the mistakes of the past and is committed to continuing this work.

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