

Roman Catholic Diocese of Greensburg, Pa.

**2018 Progress Update on Protection of Children:  
Higher Standards of Today's Catholic Church**

August 9, 2018



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### **Introduction:**

The Diocese of Greensburg is providing this progress update in order to share the many steps it has taken over the last 30 years to protect the children, youth and vulnerable adults in our care. Though we have provided other updates in the past and have endeavored to keep you advised of our progress, given the public discourse and speculation engendered by the pending release of the Report of the 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, we believe it is necessary to provide additional information about our continuing and ongoing efforts to develop, expand on, and implement these important protections. These are our higher standards. This commitment by the Diocese is one of continued progress and improvement as our Church, along with the wider society, has learned much more over the last several decades about the nature of abuse and the lasting impact it has on survivors.

The Church and our Diocese also hear the calls for transparency and openness. That's why we have always supported the release of the Grand Jury's Report. The Grand Jury spent two years hearing testimony from many courageous survivors of abuse within the Church who came forward to tell their stories. We want those survivors to have the voice they deserve.

Additionally, the State Supreme Court took the time to appoint a special master so that the ongoing legal process can be completed in a timely fashion. Had the release of an interim report been delayed much longer we would have seriously considered releasing a list of names of accused prior to its release. The same day the Grand Jury Report is made public, we will release a list of clergy in our Diocese with credible allegations against them on our website.

Today, we remind you that if you or someone you know has suffered abuse at the hands of anyone related to the Church, the Diocese is here for you to offer support, counseling, spiritual guidance and pastoral care. Indeed, although recourse in the courts against these historic and horrific crimes may be barred by applicable state laws, there are no limitations on our willingness to help survivors of abuse to heal.

### **Background:**

In 2005 and 2011 two separate grand juries investigating the Philadelphia Archdiocese uncovered unreported sexual abuse allegations against approximately 100 priests.

In March of 2016, then Attorney General Kathleen Kane released a grand jury report that detailed allegations of abuse by approximately 50 priests and religious leaders in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown and alleged cover-up by some Church and government officials.

When Attorney General Josh Shapiro took office in January 2017, he continued the probe initiated in 2016 by Kathleen Kane to include six other dioceses in Pennsylvania: Allentown, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Scranton. Over the course of two years, dozens of survivors of clergy sex abuse testified in front of the 40<sup>th</sup> Statewide Investigating Grand Jury. The Diocese of Greensburg fully cooperated with this investigation, providing tens of thousands of pages of requested records dating back to 1947, four years before the Diocese was formed.

That Grand Jury concluded in April of 2018 and issued a Report of more than 800 pages. Many parties named in the Report were given that portion of the Report in which they were named and critically discussed. In June, in response to legal challenges filed by multiple unnamed individuals who were critically identified in the Report, the State Supreme Court ordered that the Report be delayed while those unnamed individuals are provided with an opportunity to fully and fairly respond to the alleged demonstrable errors in the Report that, if they were left uncorrected, would deprive the individuals of their constitutional right to defend their reputation.

While the Diocese of Greensburg understands and respects the legitimate concerns expressed by these unnamed individuals as citizens of the Commonwealth, we agree with the Attorney General's public statements that the true and accurate facts must be made public in order for the Church and survivors to begin to move past this horrific scourge.

We applaud and support all the survivors of abuse who have courageously come forward to report the experiences of what happened to them. It doesn't matter what the circumstances were or who the abusers were, the survivors' scars and pain run deep.

That is why the Diocese of Greensburg believes it's time to put all of today's facts on the table. Despite what some people may think, today's Catholic Church is committed to transparency. We have worked hard to remove the barriers that hinder people from coming forward about the abuse they've suffered and make sure this is clear: Priests who have abused children have no place in our ministry. No one does.

## **This 2018 Diocese of Greensburg Progress Update on Protection of Children includes:**

- **Section 1** - We are sorry: A sincere and open apology to the survivors of sexual abuse and to all those impacted by the grievous failures of the Catholic Church.
- **Section 2** - We are vigilant: The Diocese's independent reviews of clergy files.
- **Section 3** - We are constantly improving: The evolution of the Diocese of Greensburg's youth protection policies.
- **Section 4** - We are united: Youth protection policies in the Catholic Church at the national level — "Zero Tolerance."
- **Section 5** - We are committed: The many steps taken to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults in the diocese.
- **Section 6** - We are responsive: Diocesan response to recent allegations of abuse.
- **Section 7** - We are caring: The support the Diocese offers to anyone who has suffered abuse, no matter when or where it occurred.
- **Section 8** - We are hopeful: Our determination for the future.
- **Section 9** - Today's Catholic Church: A fact sheet about the Diocese of Greensburg.
- **Section 10** - Quick links regarding Youth Protection at the Diocese of Greensburg and a list of necessary clearances.

### **Section 1:**

#### **We are sorry: A sincere and open apology to the survivors of child sexual abuse and to all those impacted by the grievous failures of the Catholic Church.**

Admittedly, there have been occasions where the Church and the Diocese of Greensburg have faltered in their protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and for those the Diocese of Greensburg apologizes to the survivors and their families and continually offers assistance to help them heal. We must pray for *all* survivors of clerical sexual abuse — no matter when it occurred, where it occurred or to whom it occurred. But we must do more than pray. Survivors need our help, and we stand ready to assist them with counseling, spiritual guidance, love and our sincere apologies for any past failures on the part of our Diocese.

While we are not proud of our past failures in this regard, we are proud of our Diocese's ongoing and continually evolving response, our efforts to protect, and our determination to help survivors heal. Our parishioners can be confident of the processes and procedures we have in place today to protect children and report to law enforcement any abuse of which we become aware, no matter when it occurred. We are a strong community of Christian believers who have accepted responsibility, and we have apologized for the long-ago actions of some clergy and laypeople in this Diocese. And, like the rest of society, we have learned much over the years about the causes and effects of abuse from research and therapeutic practice.

As a Church and as a Diocese, we know that sexual predators will never go away. We must focus daily on our vigilance to protect our children and eradicate this horrendous crime. To be clear, this vigilance must be extended to all aspects of society, as no organization is immune from this evil. We all recognize that our children must be protected both within and outside of the Church. We must continue to educate ourselves and our children to know the signs of abuse and how to report it. The Diocese believes it is doing an outstanding job of protecting our children — in fact, we believe we are second to none.

Of course, we are human. We recognize that there are people who will want to take advantage of our goodness and innocence. We also recognize that, despite checks and rechecks, no organization is infallible. This is why we need to ensure that our parishes and schools are the safest places possible for our young children and teenagers to pray, play and grow in the practice of their faith in God.

## **Section 2:**

### **We are vigilant: The Diocese's independent reviews of clergy files.**

Since becoming Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg in July of 2015, Bishop Edward C. Malesic has overseen two separate, independent reviews of Diocesan clergy personnel files in order to ensure that no one who is or was the subject of a credible and substantiated allegation of improper conduct with a child or young adult is currently serving in any ministerial capacity in the Diocese. One of these independent reviews was conducted by a retired Westmoreland County Judge. The other review was undertaken by outside counsel for the Diocese, Kleinbard LLC, who were retained for purposes of reviewing and producing files in response to document requests from 1947 onward by the 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury. As a result of the reviews, any relevant material was supplied to the local District Attorneys and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office.

As part of this review, we provided to the Grand Jury our current processes and procedures should we receive an allegation of the abuse of a minor, which are:

- The Diocese of Greensburg requires that every report of suspected abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult — sexual, physical or emotional — that is made to the Diocese, its parishes or schools be immediately reported to PA ChildLine and law enforcement, including the appropriate District Attorney.
- After that, the investigation is left to law enforcement.
- Depending on the response received from law enforcement, the Diocese will then take canonical action if the allegation is credible and substantiated.
- “Credible and substantiated” means that the allegation was proven to be supported by either an admission by the individual to the abuse, a preponderance of the evidence, or through a comprehensive canonical, civil or criminal investigation.
- In accordance with Diocesan policy, as soon as the Diocese is made aware of the allegation and it is determined to be credible, the person is removed from his or her place of ministry. If the allegation is substantiated, the individual is permanently removed from active ministry, and then we notify all relevant parishes. After consultation with law enforcement, we will publicize the allegation in order to encourage any other survivors to come forward.

Some of the priests identified in the Report of the 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury may be familiar, as their cases have already been reported in stories by local media in the past. Other names may not be familiar. The Diocese of Greensburg openly invites survivors of abuse by any individuals, whether named in the Grand Jury Report or not, to meet with us so that they can pursue healing and reconciliation. We stand committed to work closely with survivors and their families for their wholeness and healing. The Diocese oversees the provision of free counseling for a survivor of abuse by church personnel, including the offer of independent outside counseling services and contact with support groups and other social service assistance, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred and whether or not the alleged abuse occurred within the Diocese of Greensburg. We are here for survivors of abuse and always will be.

### **Section 3:**

#### **We are constantly improving: The evolution of the Diocese of Greensburg's youth protection policies.**

The Diocese of Greensburg has had policies on clergy sexual misconduct in place since at least 1985. The policies have evolved and been updated as evidence-based best practices dealing with abusers and helping their victims recover from the short-term and long-term trauma have evolved. Current policies also recognize the absolute necessity of allowing law enforcement professionals to use their expertise and to complete their investigation of allegations before the Diocese continues with its own canonical review. At all times, the Diocese defers to law enforcement's investigation and directives.

In April 1985, the Diocese's first written policy on Clergy Sexual Misconduct was created. That initial policy expressly stated that the "hurting individuals/families...are of primary concern." It further provided that, upon the receipt of a credible allegation, the priest was to be "relieved of his duties at the assignment" pending further investigation and evaluation.

In September 1994, a more detailed policy on Clergy Sexual Misconduct was promulgated. In that policy, the Diocese of Greensburg established a Bishop's Delegate, who was to be "in charge of all investigations in regard to clergy sexual misconduct and subsequent interventions." The Bishop's Delegate was then to "prepare the materials for presentation and recommendations" to the newly-established Clergy Sexual Misconduct Review Board. The Review Board consisted of one priest and five independent laypeople from the legal, counseling and child psychology professions who served for five-year terms. Finally, the policy established a Pastoral Care Team to "offer guidance and support to hurting families [.]"

In 2002, the Diocesan Review Board was created to replace the Clergy Sexual Misconduct Review Board. The Diocesan Review Board is an advisory group to the Diocesan Bishop and serves as a confidential review body. This group is convened by the Bishop's Delegate. The Bishop's Delegate, appointed by the Diocesan Bishop, is the person in charge of overseeing canonical investigations of clergy sexual misconduct and recommending subsequent interventions, related to the cleric in question, to the Vicar General and the Diocesan Bishop. The Review Board develops those reports and recommendations for the Bishop's Delegate and provides the Delegate with advice and recommendations regarding a pastoral response to victims and a comprehensive response plan

for an affected parish or institution. The Diocesan Review Board's work is completely independent from the investigation that is conducted by law enforcement. On the part of the Diocese, nothing is ever done to compromise or obstruct any investigation by law enforcement.

In 2002, the Diocese's Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy was further revised with the addition of a Victims Assistance Coordinator, who is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to provide appropriate spiritual and counseling assistance to families, parishes and church institutions impacted by an abuse allegation.

At the same time, all Diocesan priests and Religious Order priests with a Diocesan assignment were required to comply with Pennsylvania Act 33 (child abuse clearances) and Act 34 (criminal background checks). Before a cleric from outside the Diocese receives permission to minister in the Diocese of Greensburg, he must present a current letter of suitability for ministry from his diocesan Bishop or religious superior that documents the cleric's good standing.

In April 2003, the Diocese of Greensburg promulgated the Policy to Protect Minors, which consolidated all existing personnel policy requirements governing Diocesan employees and volunteers who have significant contact with minors. These requirements include the Acts 33 and 34 background checks and clearances. This policy was further refined in September 2003 with the additional mandate that all lay employees and volunteers — in addition to clergy — who have significant contact with minors receive child protection training.

In September 2012, the Diocese of Greensburg promulgated the "Code of Pastoral Conduct," which brought all earlier Diocesan policies into one document and clearly set forth standards and expectations for all people who act in the name of the Diocese. It applies to all bishops, priests, deacons, religious and lay members of the faithful — including all employees and volunteers — who assist in providing pastoral care in the Diocese of Greensburg, including its parishes, schools, programs and other Diocesan entities. The "Code of Pastoral Conduct" provides a new level of protection by including in Diocesan policy the protection of vulnerable adults and by defining appropriate boundaries that must be maintained by adults who are in contact with minors or vulnerable adults in Church settings.

On July 14, 2015, the day following his episcopal ordination and installation as the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg, Bishop Malesic reaffirmed the "Code of Pastoral Conduct," which is in effect today and is available for review on the Diocesan website.

## **Section 4:**

### **We are united: The development of youth protection policies in the Catholic Church at the national level — ‘Zero Tolerance.’**

The majority of the changes to the Diocese of Greensburg’s youth protection policies were implemented in 2002 as a result of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” (Charter) and the “Essential Norms,” (Norms) which were approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) at its national meeting in Dallas in the wake of the sexual abuse scandal that came to light earlier that year in Boston. The Charter created a policy that put in place structures at the national level and required more comprehensive Diocesan structures to be established to create safe environments for children and young people, to reach out to victims and assist them, to end secrecy, to immediately report abusers to law enforcement, to cooperate in all law enforcement investigations, and to permanently remove abusers from all ministries.

Most importantly, the USCCB policies established a “zero tolerance” policy, which requires that any cleric credibly accused of abusing a child is to be immediately removed from his place of ministry pending a complete and independent investigation. In the event that the allegation is substantiated, the priest is never to be reassigned to ministry in the Church. The Norms require all Bishops to adhere to this national policy. The Charter and the Norms also require annual independent audits to ensure that each Diocese is in compliance.

In 2002, the Diocese also thoroughly reviewed the personnel files of every Diocesan priest who had served in the Diocese since its formation in 1951. This review found indications of possible improper conduct on the part of some priests dating back to the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. Information on these cases was forwarded to law enforcement, and several of the cases resulted in the priest being permanently banned from public ministry.

The Diocese of Greensburg has been determined to be in compliance with the Charter and Norms in every one of its external audits conducted from 2003 to the present. The audits from 2003 until 2011 were conducted by the Gavin Group and, from 2012 until the present, by StoneBridge Business Partners. Both audit firms are independent from the Diocese and hired by the USCCB to monitor the compliance of the Diocese with the Charter. The Diocese of Greensburg is firmly committed to complying with all of the measures mandated by the Charter to prevent the sexual abuse of children and young people.

The Diocese of Greensburg’s policies and other child protection materials can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>. The Charter and Norms can also be found on the Diocese of Greensburg’s website, [www.dioceseofgreensburg.org](http://www.dioceseofgreensburg.org).



**The Charter was most recently updated in the summer of 2018. Highlights include:**

- Preamble: A call for dioceses/eparchies to use what has been learned from the past, including the “Causes and Context Study” by the John Jay College Research team, has been added. The recommendations provided in that study can be used to strengthen the protection of children and young people in the care of the Church through ongoing education, situational prevention, and additional oversight and accountability. A sentence has also been added directing dioceses/eparchies to “continue to help victims recover from the crimes of abuse and to strive to prevent these tragedies from happening again.” Additional statements regarding ongoing support for victims/survivors have also been included.
- Article 2: The phrase “other media” has been added as a means of promoting the procedures to make an allegation of abuse. This is to highlight the importance of utilizing digital media to promote the reporting of abuse.
- Article 4: The clause “with due regard for the seal of the Sacrament of Penance” has been added regarding the reporting of an allegation to public authorities, due to recent challenges to the inviolability of the seal of confession.
- Article 6: Changes were made to emphasize that all those who have contact with minors must abide by standards of behavior and appropriate boundaries. Formerly, these articles were limited to those in “positions of trust.”
- Article 10: A statement has been added for the National Review Board to continue monitoring the recommendations derived from the “Causes and Context Study.”
- Article 13: Changes have been made to ensure that *all* those whose duties include contact with minors receive background checks, rather than limiting it to those with “ongoing, unsupervised” contact with minors. Another sentence was added stating, “Each diocese/eparchy is to determine the application/renewal of background checks according to local practice.” Within this article, changes have also been made to clarify the process for issuing letters of suitability for non-incardinated priests.
- Article 17: Diaconal formation has been added to the commitment of dioceses to strengthen initial and ongoing formation programs. The “National Directory for the Formation of Permanent Deacons” was also added to this article.
- Conclusion: A statement has been added reserving authoritative interpretations of the Charter to the Conference of Bishops. The next time the Charter will be reviewed will be in 2025 or 7 years.

These revisions were already in place in the Diocese of Greensburg prior to this most recent evolution of the Charter and Norms.

In 2011, the prestigious John Jay College Research Team presented a report to the USCCB titled, “The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010.” The John Jay report showed that incidents of sexual abuse by Catholic priests rose from the mid-1960s through the late 1970s, but then declined significantly in the 1980s. The John Jay report also noted that, at that time, there was a substantial increase in knowledge and understanding in American society about victimization and the harm of child sexual abuse. The understanding of the causes of sexual offending have advanced, and the research related to the treatment of sexual abusers has expanded. All of society has learned much from the research referenced in the John Jay report. Certainly the Church has.

The John Jay report can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/The-Causes-and-Context-of-Sexual-Abuse-of-Minors-by-Catholic-Priests-in-the-United-States-1950-2010.pdf>

Moreover, the most recent national annual audit on Diocesan compliance with the USCCB — which is conducted in every Catholic diocese in the U.S. by independent investigators — shows significant progress in the Church’s work to help survivors of clergy sexual abuse find healing and the Church’s efforts to ensure that abuse does not happen in the future.

## **Section 5:**

### **We are committed: The many steps taken to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults in the Diocese of Greensburg.**

The Diocese of Greensburg is proud of its ongoing and continually evolving response, its efforts to protect, and its efforts to help survivors heal.

The Diocese of Greensburg requires that every report of suspected abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult — sexual, physical or emotional — that is made to the Diocese be immediately reported to PA ChildLine and law enforcement.

To this end, the Diocese diligently works to make sure that our children are safe with all of its priests, deacons, seminarians, employees and volunteers. The Diocese continues to do its best to form healthy and holy men who will serve as good and faithful priests and deacons in the future.

The Diocese fully vets everyone who ministers, works or volunteers in the Diocese to the best of its ability with no less than three separate background checks: (1) Pennsylvania Act 33 (child abuse clearances); (2) Act 34 (criminal background checks); and (3) FBI fingerprinting, or a signed affidavit affirming that the person has not committed any crime that would prevent him or her from working with children or youth (if the person has lived in Pennsylvania for at least 10 years). And the Diocese requires that all clergy, including its bishop(s), staff and volunteers have mandated reporter and child abuse awareness training.

We ask that if anyone suspects that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused by any person at any time, the person should call PA ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313, no matter when or where the suspected incident might have occurred. This information is on the Diocesan website, and notices to this effect are regularly published in parish bulletins and the Diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Accent*.

The Diocese treats all of its employees as mandated reporters, and these same employees are therefore required to contact PA ChildLine if they have any suspicions whatsoever of abuse of a minor. And the Diocese continues to educate and train the children and adults in the Diocese on how to spot and report abuse.

### ***Diocesan Outreach to Protect Children***

Everyone serving or working in the Diocese of Greensburg in any capacity must be proactive in reporting any suspicion of child abuse, which is why the Diocese routinely explains how to do this in the Diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Accent*, on the Diocesan website, and in Diocesan parishes and schools.

The Diocesan website, [www.dioceseofgreensburg.org](http://www.dioceseofgreensburg.org), has a link on its homepage that provides people with an accessible way to report any concern about clergy, employee, or volunteer sexual misconduct. Here, anyone can readily access the Diocesan “Code of Pastoral Conduct” and the USCCB Charter and Norms.

*The Catholic Accent* regularly publishes the contact information for PA ChildLine and for reaching the Bishop’s Delegate regarding matters of sexual misconduct. Every parish receives contact information for PA ChildLine and the Bishop’s Delegate in a regularly-scheduled reminder published in weekly bulletins, as well as informational posters that are required to be displayed prominently in every Diocesan parish, school or other Diocesan entity. Mandatory and regular publication of this information in the Catholic newspaper, parish bulletins and on the Diocesan website is how the Diocese reaches out to survivors of abuse and encourages them to come forward.

In 2003, the Diocese established a child sexual abuse reporting line. This telephone number allows anyone to report suspected child abuse to the Diocese after they have contacted PA ChildLine. To the Diocese’s knowledge, no other private or public institution undertakes this extensive outreach to protect children, which is an indication of how seriously the Diocese takes this issue.

### ***Youth Protection Training***

As of the end of the 2017-18 fiscal year, the Diocese of Greensburg has provided VIRTUS, Protecting God’s Children, training to more than 15,000 adults — employees and volunteers — since instituting the program in 2003. VIRTUS is the brand name of a best practices program designed to help recognize and prevent sexual misconduct within religious organizations, primarily in the areas of child sexual abuse and other inappropriate sexual behavior. This type of training, or its equivalent, was mandated by the USCCB Charter and Norms. As of June 30, 2017, the Diocese has invested more than \$150,000 in training and educating adults through the VIRTUS child protection program. VIRTUS training, or its equivalent, is now required of everyone who volunteers or works in the Diocese. That includes our bishop(s), all clergy, school employees, parish-based employees and all volunteers.

The Diocese of Greensburg also requires mandated reporting training for all clergy and employees, educating them about the legal requirements for reporting suspected child abuse under the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law that went into effect in May 2007 and was updated in December 2014. Moreover, in this past year alone, nearly 10,000 children in Catholic schools and parish-based religious education programs in the Diocese have received age-appropriate abuse prevention education.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted new legislation, which went into effect in December of 2014, that updated, among other items, the Child Protective Services Law related to the reporting of suspected child abuse and background checks. The Diocese of Greensburg, taking the broadest interpretation of those requirements, requires all of its employees and all of its volunteers, whether or not they work directly with children or teens, to go through the state-mandated background checks and to adhere to the new reporting laws. That includes *every* member of the clergy, including the bishop(s), and *every* employee and *every* volunteer working in any Diocesan entity, including parishes and Catholic schools, whether they work directly with children or not.

## **Section 6:**

### **We are responsive: Diocesan response to recent allegations of abuse.**

The case of Father John T. Sweeney is an example of how effective and efficient the Diocese of Greensburg's current child protection policies and procedures are in practice and how they can serve as a model to be replicated by others.

The Diocese of Greensburg was informed by the Westmoreland County District Attorney's Office on Sept. 20, 2016, that a report of alleged sexual abuse of a child involving Father Sweeney dating back to the early 1990s was made to PA ChildLine. This news was surprising to the Diocese, because the Diocese had uncovered no information raising concerns about Father Sweeney's conduct with children during the independent reviews of his clergy personnel file. Indeed, Father Sweeney's file did not contain a single prior allegation of sexual misconduct, whether credible or not. Nevertheless, the Diocese moved immediately to respond to the PA ChildLine report.

In accordance with Diocesan policy, as soon as the Diocese was made aware of the allegation, Father Sweeney was removed from Holy Family Parish, West Newton, where he had been serving as pastor since Oct. 30, 2008. His priestly faculties were immediately suspended, and he was placed on administrative leave effective Sept. 21, 2016, pending an investigation by law enforcement. At that time he was prohibited from presenting himself as a priest in public, and his residence was transferred to the Diocese's retired priest facilities. He was required to avoid any unsupervised contact with minors.

A few days later, all of the information related to the allegation against Father Sweeney, along with his entire personnel file, was provided to the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

At the request of law enforcement officials, the Diocese of Greensburg did not publicize the allegation, even though the canonical precept entered against Father Sweeney on Sept. 21, 2016, made clear to him that he was being removed from ministry for allegedly offending a minor. The Diocese fully cooperated with law enforcement's investigation of the allegation and, at the same time, continued to cooperate with the 40<sup>th</sup> Statewide Investigating Grand Jury's ongoing investigation of sexual abuse of minors.

More than 10 months after removing Father Sweeney from ministry, on July 24, 2017, Father Sweeney was arrested and charged with one felony count of sexual abuse of a minor.

In response to Father Sweeney's arrest, the Diocese sent a letter to every parish in the Diocese to be disseminated to parishioners at the weekend Masses of July 28-29, 2017. Each parish where Father

Sweeney had served received a letter specific to them. The letter included the list of his assignments, and a request for anyone who had information pertaining to Father Sweeney to call the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General's hotline number, which was included in the letter. The letter also included the fact that the Diocese offers free counseling through Catholic Charities to anyone who has been impacted by sexual abuse by church personnel, even if the abuse occurred in another Diocese.

Parishioners were reminded in the letter that every report made to the Diocese involving the suspected abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult — whether the abuse is sexual, physical or emotional — is immediately reported to PA ChildLine and the appropriate District Attorney.

Bishop Malesic attended the three weekend Masses at the parish where Father Sweeney's alleged abuse took place. He delivered the homily, reminded parishioners of the Diocesan commitment to protect children and assured them that the Diocese took immediate action to remove Father Sweeney from his assignment as soon as it learned of the abuse report. He invited anyone who had a question or concern to talk with him or a Diocesan counselor, who was also present at all three Masses, immediately after Mass.

Father James W. Clark's case unfolded in a similar manner. An allegation against him was received by the Diocese of Greensburg on June 28, 2018, and dated to events five decades ago, prior to his entrance into the seminary and ordination as a priest, while working as a janitor at the former St. James School in Apollo.

The Diocese followed its policies: The allegation was reported immediately to PA ChildLine and to the District Attorneys of Westmoreland and Armstrong Counties. The allegation was determined to be credible and substantiated less than 24 hours later. Father Clark was then immediately removed from his assignments as a parochial vicar and hospital chaplain in Uniontown.

Similar to Father Sweeney, this was the first allegation of sexual misconduct that the Diocese had received involving Father Clark.

Because his ministry impacted a large geographical area, all parishioners of the Diocese of Greensburg were informed of the allegation against Father Clark, and his subsequent removal from ministry, in a notice that was to be read at every weekend Mass in the Diocese. Parishioners were encouraged to come forward with any information, any additional victims were encouraged to report abuse through PA ChildLine, and people were reminded that the Church will provide counseling to any victim of sexual abuse by church personnel, regardless of where or when they suffered abuse.

## **Section 7:**

**We are caring. The support the Diocese offers to anyone who has suffered abuse, no matter when or where it occurred.**

The Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg openly invites survivors to meet with him to pursue healing and reconciliation as part of the Diocese's commitment to work closely with victims and their families for wholeness and healing. The Diocese also oversees the provision of free counseling for a survivor of abuse by church personnel, including the offer of independent outside counseling services of the survivor's choice, and contact with support groups and other social service assistance, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred and whether or not the alleged abuse occurred within the Diocese of Greensburg.

The Bishop's delegate offers the individual and his or her family the services of the Pastoral Care Team and a personal meeting with the Bishop. If the individual lives within the Diocese of Greensburg and accepts the offer of assistance from the Victim Assistance Coordinator, the Coordinator works with the individual to offer him or her options for counseling services. If the individual lives outside the Diocese of Greensburg and accepts the offer for pastoral care and counseling from the Bishop's delegate, the Victim Assistance Coordinator contacts the Victim Assistance Coordinator in the individual's current Diocese of residence. The local Victim Assistance Coordinator then provides information to the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Greensburg regarding psychotherapeutic services available for that individual.

The individual chooses his or her type of care offered by the Victim Assistance Coordinator. The individual is encouraged to contact the local Victim Assistance Coordinator and/or the local psychotherapist they wish to see for services for more information about services offered.

## **Section 8:**

### **We are hopeful: Our determination for the future.**

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are a people of hope. The Gospel requires us to be responsible for the health, care and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, and we take this responsibility very seriously. It is our fervent prayer that this public release of information will not only serve as a catalyst for healing, but as a model of transparency for all institutions and places where child abuse occurs, whether it is in community, educational, government, healthcare, athletic, or other private, public, or religious institutions.

As St. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians, it is when we are weak that God provides us strength. Without a willingness to be transparent, we cannot bear one another's burdens, find reconciliation or experience healing.

To reiterate, the Diocese of Greensburg is saddened by our past failures — grievous failures — and we are horrified by the conduct that we ourselves would have never condoned and committed by men who, in many cases, many of us never knew. But, we are also aware that our Diocese has moved forward from this past and evolved in combatting this evil, and we are proud of the work that we have undertaken over the last 30 years to establish a safe environment for our children and our youth in the Diocese of Greensburg. And we are thankful for our faithful, who remain devoted through trying times, including our good priests who serve us well during these times of ongoing public scrutiny.

In closing, everyone must learn from past mistakes — and the Diocese of Greensburg certainly has. We must all continue to help our brothers and sisters who are survivors of abuse to heal and to move forward with their lives. They deserve our love, our support and our encouragement. The Diocese will remain ever vigilant, transparent in its actions and committed to its “zero tolerance” policy. Current Diocesan policies, procedures and processes can and should serve as a model for child protection programs to be replicated and emulated elsewhere — in public and private schools, nursing homes, foster care programs, special education programs, youth sports and youth service organizations. All children everywhere and in every situation must be protected. The Diocese is willing to work with every institution in our society to address this evil, prevent this crime, and help those survivors heal and move forward. Because we are a people of hope. We invite you and every organization to join us on this journey to protect children.

## Section 9: Today's Catholic Church: A fact sheet about the Diocese of Greensburg.

PURPOSE + CALLING

*Higher*  
STANDARDS

EDUCATION + MISSION

This is today's Catholic Church

*Higher*  
STANDARDS

This is today's Catholic Church

Today's Catholic Church is committed to higher standards. The people of the Diocese of Greensburg should know that we have learned from the mistakes made in the past. Our Catholic Church is a good Church. We have taken care of the sick. We have helped the poor. We have preached the Gospel. The Lord has given much success to the work of our hands.

I can assure you that the Church in the Diocese of Greensburg today has evolved far beyond the Church described in media reports. One of the safest places to be as a young person today is the Catholic Church. This is not just a convenient saying; the hard numbers of current statistics bear this out as a fact. The statewide investigation was done on the Church of seventy, fifty, and, most recently, thirty years ago. Things you may have read or heard do not reflect the reality of the Church we are today. We are dramatically different from the Church of the past.

We believe we will get through this time of suffering if we remain in Jesus and allow him to remain in us. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. With Him, even the impossible becomes doable.

Do not be afraid to be identified as a Catholic. Do not let the past stand in the way of your love for today's Church. Allow this moment to reenergize your commitment to the Church that Christ founded. Our faith is His gift.

*+ Edward C. Malesic*

Bishop Edward C. Malesic

*Diocese of Greensburg*

Established March 10, **1951**  
by Pope Pius XII



**3,334 square miles** covering the Western Pennsylvania counties of Armstrong, Fayette, Indiana and Westmoreland

Total Catholic population:  
**137,641**

Total Catholic households:  
**59,472**

Parishes: **78**

Active Diocesan Priests: **51**

Retired Diocesan Priests: **35**

Religious Order Priests with Diocesan Appointments: **14**

International Priests: **14**

Women Religious: **258**



### Protecting God's Children

More than **15,000** people cleared and trained in the last **15 years**

All clergy, employees and volunteers have **background clearances:**

PA Criminal Background Check



PA Child Abuse History Clearance



FBI Fingerprint Check

Read and sign the **Pastoral Code of Conduct** for the Diocese of Greensburg

PA Mandated Reporter Training course

**VIRTUS:** National Catholic online training to combat child abuse



We do more than any other organization for **Child Abuse Survivors** by offering counseling no matter when, where or by whom it occurred.

For help call Bishop's Delegate:  
**724-837-0901 x1221**

To report abuse call ChildLine:  
**1-800-932-0313**

**Today's Catholic Church: A fact sheet about the Diocese of Greensburg. (continued)**



**Catholic Education**

**11** Elementary Schools  
**2** Junior-Senior High Schools

An education that combines **Catholic faith** and teachings with **academic excellence**

A **safe welcoming environment** for all

More than **2,300** students in Catholic schools and thousands more in parish religious formation programs

Instills the value of **service to others**

Emphasizes **moral development**

**2018** graduates were offered **\$10,117,919** in **scholarships** and grants

**886 college credits** earned by **2018** graduates through the college-in-high-school program



**Catholic Charities**

Answers nearly **20,000** calls for assistance every year

Delivered **\$200,000** in aid to 66 families who lost their furnaces and water heaters during weather disasters in **2016-2017**

**\$1.27M** distributed in direct material assistance from Salt & Light dinners **1999-2018**

Helps **1,000** families a year pay their utility bills

Logged **7,000** volunteer hours

Distributed **\$400,000** from Poverty Relief Fund since 2009



The Diocese of Greensburg is composed of nearly **140,000** Catholics in **78** parishes across Armstrong, Fayette, Indiana and Westmoreland Counties.

**Mission Work**



Faith is a gift. Our mission is to share it.

Individuals of all ages dedicate **time, talent** and **treasure** to mission communities **locally** and **internationally**

We help meet the **material and spiritual needs** of the poor around the world



**Service Organizations**

The St. Vincent de Paul Society, Knights of Columbus, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, Catholic Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts, parish food pantries and many others



Visit the **homebound, sick and imprisoned**

Conduct **food drives** and **gift collections** during the holidays



Perform **service projects** to improve our communities





**Section 10:**

**Quick links regarding Youth Protection in the Diocese of Greensburg and a list of necessary clearances.**

Youth Protection in the Diocese of Greensburg:

<http://www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/youth-protection/Pages/virtus.aspx>

A list of necessary clearances:

<http://www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/youth-protection/Pages/childservices.aspx>

