



Cabrini Notes

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On the Child Victims Act, Part II

Last week I introduced the nature of the Child Victims Act (CVA) and how it explains all of the advertising that has been taking place in the media lately. Now we must look—albeit, ever so briefly—to what has been happening in our diocese with regard to the matter of abuse.

In the Catholic Courier in April it was reported that the Diocese of Rochester began addressing child sexual abuse decades ago, forming its first Review Board in 1993; nevertheless, the adoption of the Dallas Charter in 2002 (Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People) established by the US Catholic bishops, brought about major changes in archdioceses, dioceses and eparchies (Eastern Catholic dioceses) across the United States. Since 2006, there have been no arrests made in the diocese for the abuse of a child—this is to say that the Diocese has not had a contemporary case of sexual abuse of a minor reported in 13 years. From those years until now the diocese has been implementing a series of trainings and screenings in an effort to prevent it from happening again. For those in the parish that volunteer in any way that has to do with children, youth and vulnerable adults, they are very familiar with these procedures.

In terms of what has happened over the years the diocese has regularly received calls and in various ways has tried to meet the needs of victims who have alleged abuse and whose cases are deemed credible. In June, at both a diocesan meeting with priests as well as in the Catholic Courier, the diocese shared that dating back to the 1980s—using funds from its self-insurance program, insurance carriers, accumulated reserves and pooled investment funds—victims have been compensated in the amount of \$1.6 million including counseling and treatment. Last year the diocese began using a former judge, Justice Robert Lunn, to independently assess cases and there were further compensations granted until that program was ended now that the CVA was to take effect. He reviewed about 30 cases, so the payout figure will rise significantly as those are concluded—it is believed that this number will set the total above \$4 million. It must be noted that all parish funds are separated from the funds that the Diocese of Rochester is using for compensation.

Despite the payouts to compensate the victims' very real pain and anguish (not to mention loss of work, relationships and the requisite joy of life that all ought to experience) and notwithstanding the efforts the diocese has made to prevent abuse in the future, the shame and embarrassment, the hurt and the anger remain for so many—victims and the faithful alike. Simply said, there is no human way to compensate for such damage caused, there is only the hope of divine intervention such that grace, consolation and blessing might return to the Church as we renew our call to live our baptismal promises to renounce Satan and live in Christ.

Still, as the one-year window opens August 14, the diocese already has more than 100 cases yet to deal with; so we foresee more media coverage, more wounds exposed and more shame for the sins of the past to be endured. Yet, though these are indeed almost exclusively sins of the past (as the graphic reveals), they very much haunt the Church and the lives of far too many today. To that end I invite everyone in the parish to come to **Annunciation Church on Sunday Sept. 1 at 7:00 PM for a special Eucharistic Holy Hour for Healing**. We will dedicate this hour for the healing of individual souls and for the Church as a whole. Thank you to all who are praying for healing, may the Lord come quickly to our aid.

Peace in Christ,
Fr. Mickey

