



THE MOST REVEREND
Alexander J. Brunett
ARCHBISHOP OF SEATTLE

April 16, 2010

My dear friends in Christ,

In recent weeks, I have received inquiries about international media coverage of the clergy sexual abuse scandal and the Church's response. While I cannot address the issues that have arisen in Ireland, Germany and in other particular churches, these stories are disturbing to me, as I am sure they are to you. As the news reports unfold, I want you to have information about the Archdiocese of Seattle's response to sexual abuse that will help answer your questions and those of your family and acquaintances.

Sexual abuse of children is a heinous crime, and when committed by a member of the clergy it is a breach of sacred trust. While our response to this problem has not always been adequate, we cannot change what happened decades in the past. We must instead take responsibility for these crimes, apologize to victims, offer them compassionate pastoral care and take decisive steps to prevent future abuse. This has been the commitment by the Archdiocese of Seattle for more than 20 years and it remains our firm commitment today. Our ongoing efforts include:

- Immediate removal of any priest, employee or volunteer within the Archdiocese upon receipt of a credible allegation of abuse, regardless of when the abuse occurred;
- Immediate reporting to law enforcement authorities;
- Investigation of any credible allegation by a qualified professional investigator;
- Consultation with the Archdiocesan Review Board, comprised of professionals with extensive experience in the field of child sexual abuse;
- Permanent removal from ministry of any priest, employee or volunteer when an allegation is admitted or established;
- Comprehensive background checks for all priests, employees and those volunteers with ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors;
- Annual Safe Environment training for all priests, all employees and those volunteers who have ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors;
- Safe Environment education for elementary and secondary school children in our Catholic schools;
- Training for parents and any interested individuals.

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You will find Web links with additional information about our Archdiocese's response to sexual abuse and helpful news articles by visiting the archdiocesan homepage at www.seattlearch.org. I hope this information is helpful in answering any questions you may have about recent media reports. More importantly, I hope it will assist you in understanding better the issue of clergy sexual abuse as our local Church strives to resolve past cases with justice and fairness and takes action to prevent abuse in the future.

As always, I ask anyone who has knowledge of sexual abuse or misconduct by a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Seattle to call the archdiocesan hotline at 1-800-446-7762.

With warmest regards and Easter wishes, I remain

Your servant in Christ,

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Most Rev. Alex J. Brunett
Archbishop of Seattle