



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL
1011 FIRST AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

October 6, 2016
Month of the Rosary
Year of Mercy

My dear people of the archdiocese,

Today, I announced the creation of an *Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program*, designed to help bring healing and reconciliation to those who are victim-survivors of sexual abuse by members of the clergy of the Archdiocese of New York.

This program will, please God, continue to help bring a measure of peace to those who have suffered abuse by a member of the clergy of the archdiocese. While the Church in general, and particularly here in this archdiocese, has made great strides in dealing vigorously with clergy accused of abuse, and in preventing acts of abuse through our *Safe Environment* programs, we continue to hear from victim-survivors that more needs to be done to reach out to those who have been harmed in the past. As this *Year of Mercy* nears its conclusion, it is fitting and proper that we take this opportunity to ask forgiveness for mistakes that have been made by those – only a tiny percentage of our priests – representing the Church, and seek reconciliation with those who have been hurt and feel alienated from the Church.

Our *Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program* will be headed by Mr. Kenneth Feinberg, regarded as the preeminent mediator in the country, and his associate, Ms. Camille Biros. Beginning immediately, they will work with those individuals who have previously notified the archdiocese that they suffered abuse. We are contacting these individuals to invite them to participate in the program.

After they have completed their work with those who have previously notified the archdiocese, Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros will begin to review whatever new allegations brought forward against clergy for whom there has previously been a substantiated allegation, as well as those who have not previously been charged with misbehavior. In order to protect the rights of our priests and deacons, a person making an allegation will be required to go through our normal process, which includes reporting the allegation to the district attorney, and having the case investigated by independent professional investigators and our lay review board. They will be informed that filing a false claim with the district attorney is perjury, a felony, to prevent individuals from filing false claims in the hope of “easy money.” While the goal of this program is to promote healing for victim-survivors, we must also be concerned with protecting the rights of our clergy throughout the process.

Former Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, U.S. District Judge Loretta A. Preska, and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Jeanette Cueva, M.D., an expert in child psychiatry, have agreed to serve as an *Independent Oversight Committee*, to oversee the implementation and administration of the IRCP. Commissioner Kelly, Judge Preska, and Dr. Cueva have reviewed and approved the protocols of the IRCP, and they will continue to track the progress of the program for the archdiocese, although the decisions reached by Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros regarding compensation to victim-survivors are final and cannot be appealed or overturned by the archdiocese or the *Independent Oversight Committee*.

I hear from you, my people, that, while still bruised and angry about this past crisis, you do appreciate very much the reform and progress that has been made. But, you also tell me that more outreach needs to be done to the victim-survivors. I hope this helps.

You may also wonder – since it is your money – where the revenue to cover this compensation will come from. I can tell you where it will *not* come from: it will *not* come from the money you have given to your parishes and schools, nor will it come from the archdiocese in our *Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal*, our current promising *Renew and Rebuild* capital campaign, Catholic Charities, or any other apostolate you intend your generous offerings to support.

Like any family facing an extraordinary expense, we will *borrow* the money, in a long-term loan, to be paid back gradually by scraping to find income from sources not designated for specific Church or charitable use.

If you have an allegation against a priest or deacon of the archdiocese, I urge you to go immediately to the district attorney. You may also contact the victim assistance coordinator of the archdiocese, by emailing victimsassistance@archny.org. To learn more information, including how to file a claim with the *Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program*, you should visit www.NYArchdiocese-IRCPSettlementProgram.com

May I ask your prayers that this outreach might accomplish its goal of helping bring peace and reconciliation to those victim-survivors who have not only experienced the horror of abuse, but have also felt as if they were abandoned by the Church.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tim. Card. Dolan" with a cross symbol to the left.

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York