



DIocese of ALLENTOWN
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Note to Editors:

- Below is a statement from the Diocese of Allentown on the Grand Jury Report.
- Bishop Alfred Schlert's comments on the report are in a letter to be read at all Masses this coming weekend. The letter is attached.
- A video message from Bishop Schlert on the Grand Jury Report can be downloaded at this link: [Bishop Schlert Statement](#)
- A second video with information on the Allentown Diocese Victim Assistance Program can be downloaded at this link: [Allentown Diocese Victim Assistance Program](#)
- More information can be found on our website [here](#).

Statement on Statewide Grand Jury Report

Past incidents of abuse contained in the Grand Jury Report are abhorrent and tragic. We apologize to everyone who has been hurt by the past actions of some members of the clergy. We know that these past actions have caused pain and mistrust for many people. The victims and survivors of abuse are in our prayers daily.

Much has changed over the past 15 years, as the statewide Grand Jury acknowledged in its report. In the event of an allegation of abuse, we immediately remove the priest from ministry, immediately notify law enforcement, and address the issue in a transparent manner.

Most of the incidents in the report date back decades and the priests involved are either no longer in active ministry or deceased.

The Diocese of Allentown has taken strong and decisive action to prevent abuse, and to provide support for victims and survivors. It has diligently enforced the protocols it has put in place to protect children.

The Diocese will learn from the Grand Jury report and use it to further improve protections for children and young people.

Sadly, abuse is still part of the society in which we live. Today in the Diocese of Allentown, victims and survivors are heard and cared for, perpetrators are held accountable and children are protected. The Diocese of Allentown:

- Requires rigorous background checks for clergy, staff and volunteers.
- Has instituted more rigorous screening and requirements for candidates for the priesthood.

- Has educated 38,000 adults on how to recognize and respond to abuse.
- Provides annual, age-appropriate training in recognizing and preventing abuse for children in its schools and religious education programs.
- Has designated 123 safe environment coordinators in its parishes, schools and ministries.
- Has required more than 5,000 people to take Mandated Reporter Training.
- Established an independent review board made up of people with expertise to advise the Bishop in abuse-related issues.
- Cooperates with law enforcement, just as it cooperated with the Grand Jury.

Anyone who knows of incidents of abuse, in the Church or outside it, should report it to the State ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313, the State Attorney General's hotline at 1-888-538-8541 or to local law enforcement. The Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to provide assistance to anyone who, as a minor, was abused by a priest, deacon or employee or volunteer of the Diocese or its parishes. Her direct line is 1-800-791-9209.