



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

320 CATHEDRAL STREET • BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201 • 410-547-5437 • FAX: 410-547-8234

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 5, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today's report from the Maryland Attorney General is first and foremost a sad and painful reminder of the tremendous harm caused to innocent children and young people by some ministers of the Church. The detailed accounts of abuse are shocking and soul searing. It is difficult for most to imagine that such evil acts could have actually occurred. For victim-survivors everywhere, they know the hard truth: These evil acts did occur.

To all survivors, I offer my most earnest apology on behalf of the Archdiocese and pledge my continued solidarity and support for your healing. We hear you. We believe you and your courageous voices have made a difference. Through difficult, although deeply meaningful, meetings, I have experienced your brave witness, and the power of your words and testimony compel my personal conviction to ensure we do everything possible to prevent future incidents of abuse and promote healing for survivors.

The report details a reprehensible time in the history of this Archdiocese, a time that will not be covered up, ignored or forgotten. Acknowledgment, I know, is of utmost importance. My immediate predecessors and I have offered unyielding public acknowledgment of the horrors of this era. In 2002, the Archdiocese publicly released the names of clergy members credibly accused of committing child sexual abuse, dating back to the 1930s. We continue to make public the names of abusers as we learn about them and as new accusations are reported.

It is important that we shine God's light on these lived accounts of abuse. The exposure illustrates the radical changes the Archdiocese began making in the 1990s to end this scourge. These efforts have been significant, and the Archdiocese has changed. The Archdiocese is not the same organization it was when, as the report documents, cases of abuse peaked during the [1960s and 1970s](#). Instances fell every year and every decade since then, alongside the development of canon and criminal law and Archdiocesan accountability standards and policies designed to protect children. Having spent four years investigating the Archdiocese, former Attorney General Brian Frosh signaled that the cultural changes, child protection policies and accountability measures the Archdiocese began implementing more than a generation ago have proven successful.

Make no mistake, however: today's strong record of protection and transparency does not excuse past failings that have led to the lasting spiritual, psychological and emotional harm victim-survivors have endured.

We continue to improve and build on the changes and accountability that define today's Archdiocese. Another key turning point was in 1993 – 30 years ago – when the Archdiocese began reporting all allegations of abuse to law enforcement. Even if law enforcement does not press charges, the Archdiocese still takes seriously our own commitment to zero tolerance by permanently removing from ministry anyone credibly accused of child sexual abuse.

The Archdiocese will continue to work with victim-survivors, as we have for decades, by providing counseling, settlements and support. More than 300 victim-survivors have come to the Archdiocese and shared their horrific experiences. In turn, we have journeyed with them to provide a path toward healing at the survivor's own direction and guidance.

Please read my pastoral letter ["Apology, Healing & Action: The Church's Work to Repair Sacred Trust."](#) This is a full and direct response that creates a clear path forward for our Church.

We pray this report will be a helpful step in the continued journey toward healing for victim-survivors, and indeed, for all of the faithful and for the Church itself. We remain wholly and steadfastly committed to continuing the efforts of the last generation that are designed to ensure the safety of children and prevent the abuses described in today's report from ever occurring again.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William E. Lori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore