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New Jersey Dioceses to Establish Victim Compensation and Counseling Program

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark, announced today that the Archdiocese of Newark and the Dioceses of Camden, Trenton, Paterson and Metuchen are committed to the establishment of a Victim Compensation and Counseling Program. The details and mechanics of this Program will be finalized after consultation with - and input from - all stakeholders, and will be released when they are available.

This Program will provide the resources to compensate those victims of child sexual abuse by clergy and employees of the Dioceses in New Jersey whose financial claims are legally barred by New Jersey's statute of limitations. This will give victims a formal voice and allow them to be heard by an independent panel. The Cardinal said that the Program also will assure that victims who have not received any financial compensation will be paid, regardless of whether their claims meet the time requirements of the statute of limitations. This initiative will expand on the current arrangement through which the Catholic Church in New Jersey already has provided some fifty million dollars in financial settlements to victims of abuse. The vast majority of these claims had been barred by the statute of limitations.

The Program also will be a resource to provide permanent funding for necessary counseling to those who have been victimized. Such counseling so often is needed to help in the healing of those who have been harmed.

Cardinal Tobin also announced that the Roman Catholic Dioceses in New Jersey will undertake a complete review of their files so that, early next year, the names of all priests and deacons who have been credibly accused of the sexual abuse of minors will be made public. The Dioceses will undertake this action in coordination with the Attorney General of New Jersey's ongoing Task Force examining the issue of clergy sexual abuse. It is hoped that these steps will aid in the process of healing for victims, who are deserving of our support and prayers.

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