



Office of the Bishop

DATE: September 12, 2019

TO: All Clergy, Religious and Staff:

FROM: Bishop Robert McElroy

SUBJECT: Independent Victim Compensation Program Begins Monday, September 16

Next Monday afternoon, the Independent Victim Compensation Program sponsored by our diocese and five other participating (arch)dioceses in California will begin accepting applications for compensation from victim-survivors who were abused as minors by a priest incardinated to the Diocese of San Diego.

This is a somber, but necessary, step. It allows victim-survivors to get the resources they need to heal, and it allows the Church to acknowledge the grievous and unconscionable sins committed by individual priests and the failure of the hierarchy to protect them.

The announcement will occur at a news conference in Los Angeles at 4 p.m., Monday, Sept. 16, attended by Washington, DC-based attorneys Ken Feinberg and Camille Biros, the Administrators of the ICP, and members of the Independent Oversight Committee (IOC), a group of prominent lay Catholics, working with the Administrators to make sure the interests of victim-survivors are always represented in the process.

Feinberg, Biros and the IOC are completely independent of Church authority. They do not report to the bishops. Any settlement offered by Feinberg and Biros is binding on the participating dioceses, but a victim-survivor taking part in the program is free to stop at any time in the process, to reject the offer, and pursue whatever legal recourse they might have. There is no fee to participate, no attorney is required to file a claim and the application is confidential.

There is no time limit on when the abuse may have taken place. All claims, regardless of how long ago the abuse may have occurred, will be considered by the Program Administrators. U.S. citizenship is not required to participate. Feinberg and Biros have said that most qualifying claims can be approved and paid within 90 days of the completion of the application.

Settlements paid for through this program will come from diocesan funds, insurance and insurance reserves. No money will come from contributions to the Annual Catholic Appeal nor are there any plans to use parish resources to fund compensation.

The Administrators have set up a bilingual website where anyone can get additional information or register to take part in the program. The website is www.CaliforniaDiocesesICP.com. It contains information of how to prepare an application, including instructions on how to submit a

claim by mail. We will also have a button on our www.sdcatholic.org website so anyone can directly connect to the Independent Compensation Program website.

The other (arch)dioceses taking part in the program are Los Angeles, Sacramento, Fresno, San Bernardino and Orange.

Let us always pray for the victims of priestly sexual abuse. The sinful crimes that were committed – upon children of God entrusted to our care – are despicable and have brought tremendous pain to all our Church. They have also caused lasting pain to the innocent child victims. As their pain is ongoing, so must be our prayers.