



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

October 15, 2017

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

Since my installation in January, I have had the joyful opportunity to visit many of the Diocese's parishes, schools and ministries. Thank you for your commitment to the pursuit of holiness and mission in every dimension of your lives. Thank you for your intimacy with Father, Son and Holy Spirit and your deep desire to share your Catholic faith on Long Island and to be instruments of *dramatic missionary growth*. Your commitment to the Catholic Church's Eucharistic Mission of Mercy to the World has inspired me at every turn.

As your Servant Successor of the Apostles and as your Shepherd, I am now asking all of us together to take a new and important step in the Church's Eucharistic Mission of Mercy by announcing that the Diocese of Rockville Centre will be making a major commitment to the ongoing healing of survivors of acts of child sexual abuse committed by clergy.

As you may have heard, I announced this past week the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP) for the Diocese of Rockville Centre. This program follows years of meaningful and ever vigilant steps taken in this Diocese to protect children and youth. It is a critical and tangible next step towards reconciliation, healing and compensation for survivors of acts of abuse committed by diocesan clergy.

Our Program will be administered by Mr. Kenneth Feinberg, a preeminent mediator in the country who has administered numerous high-profile compensation programs, including the September 11<sup>th</sup> Victim Compensation Fund and the Compensation Fund for the victims of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Mr. Feinberg will be aided by his colleague, Ms. Camille Biros, in this effort.

The Diocese has also established an Independent Oversight Committee to oversee the implementation and administration of the Program. This committee consists of the Honorable A. Gail Prudenti, Dean of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University and former Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts of New York State; Michael Cardello III, a partner with the law firm of Moritt Hock & Hamroff; and Dr. Thomas Demaria, a New York State Psychologist who is the Director of the Psychological Services Center of the Doctoral Psychology Program at Long Island University Post.

The Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program builds on the reforms and best practices for protecting our children in the Catholic Church. The outreach of Bishops and survivors' assistance coordinators to survivors and their families, a firm zero tolerance policy and immediate reporting and cooperation with civil authorities, diocesan and parish audits, the ongoing training of clergy, employees and volunteers to prevent child abuse, extensive background checks on employees and volunteers, thorough screening of our seminarians preparing to be priests – these are examples of the proactive procedures which have been integrated into every dimension of the Catholic Church's life and will always require our moment by moment vigilance and commitment.


It is important to note that the funding for this program will come from investment returns over time and insurance programs. Of course, if we were not using these funds for this purpose they could have been used for other dimensions of the Church's mission. However, I am convinced that using these funds to help bring reconciliation, healing and compensation for survivors is a vitally important goal and commitment, and the critical next step in our Church's mission of mercy.

Pope Francis said that survivors of abuse and their families are "true heralds of hope and ministers of mercy". Each one of us in every parish in the Diocese of Rockville Centre and the universal Church is called to pray, to sacrifice and to be instruments of healing for those who have experienced sexual abuse or any form of abuse. In this spirit, we are instruments of the Holy Spirit and the Divine Mercy.

To learn more about the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program, please visit the diocesan website [www.drvc.org](http://www.drvc.org) and click on "Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program" to access full Program information. *You can visit the Program site directly by going to [www.RockvilleCentreDioceseIRCP.com](http://www.RockvilleCentreDioceseIRCP.com).*

We as a Church recognize that no amount of monetary compensation could ever erase or undo the grave harm suffered by survivors of child abuse. Still, we embrace Christ's healing power and the Mission of Mercy of the Catholic Church as we begin our Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program. We stand in solidarity with our survivors and their families and we continue our commitment and vigilance to the protection of children in our Church and in society. God bless you all and thank you for the inspirational way you live our Church's Mission of Mercy each day.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Most Reverend John O. Barres  
Bishop of Rockville Centre