



Press Release

Contact: Danielle E. Cummings
Chancellor/Director of Communications
315.470-1476

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DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE ANNOUNCES INDEPENDENT RECONCILIATION COMPENSATION PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS OF CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE

SYRACUSE, NY – Bishop Cunningham announced today the establishment of a voluntary Independent Reconciliation Compensation Program (IRCP) for survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The purpose of the program is to promote reconciliation and further healing of those who were harmed by members of the clergy.

In introducing the program, Bishop Cunningham said, “Over the past year, we have monitored the IRCP in the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Diocese of Rockville Centre. The response from survivors and their families has been extremely positive. We know and acknowledge that we cannot reverse the damage that was done but our hope is that this new effort will provide an opportunity to seek forgiveness for the irreparable acts of the past and perhaps, bring a sense of healing to some.”

The program will be administered by Mr. Kenneth Feinberg and Ms. Camille Biros. Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros are well known for their experience in mediation and administration of compensation programs for the survivors of the 9/11 tragedy, the BP oil spill and most recently the IRCP programs offered in the three downstate dioceses.

Serving as independent administrators, Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros will work with those who have previously notified the diocese that they had been harmed by a member of the clergy. These individuals will be contacted by letter to invite them to participate in this voluntary program. Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros retain complete and sole discretion over all eligibility agreements and settlement compensation amounts for the eligible individuals. The diocese will accept their determinations without question.

Bishop Cunningham stated, “There is no question we have made missteps in handling this crisis.

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However, over the past 15 years, the Diocese of Syracuse has addressed this problem aggressively by reporting all allegations to the appropriate district attorney, ensuring that no clergy with a credible allegation of abuse remains in ministry, and preventing acts of abuse through our highly successful Safe Environment Program. Survivors have been provided counseling, spiritual direction and other support to help them find ways to move forward. As we begin this Lenten season, we must continue to seek forgiveness as a Church and seek reconciliation for those who have been hurt.”

“In administering this program in now four dioceses, we have witnessed the reaction of the survivors. They have seen the Church’s desire to right the wrongs of the past”, said Mr. Feinberg.

The total cost of the program will be paid from the Diocese of Syracuse’s general liability insurance program. The diocese will *not* use any money given by the people of the diocese to support parishes, schools, the annual Hope Appeal, the Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese, the Cathedral Restoration Fund, Catholic Charities or any other charitable fund in the diocese.

For more information on the Independent Reconciliation Compensation program, please visit www.SyracuseDioceseIRCP.com.

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