

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The release of the 2011 Grand Jury Report, the announcement by the former Archbishop that there were no men in ministry with credible allegations of sexual abuse and the removal of over 20 priests from ministry just three weeks later, thrust the faithful of the Archdiocese into a collective community crisis. While working toward effectively addressing the issues raised by the 2011 Grand Jury Report, the Church has become more cognizant of its responsibility to address, support and assist the faithful in processing the events of the past, while confronting the larger issue of sexual violence in the future.

Confronting sexual violence in our Archdiocese will require us to address the harm that has occurred in a way that recognizes and acknowledges the reality of sexual violence in the broader community as a framework for the anger, shame, betrayal, grief, sense of failure and the resulting distrust that is felt by many Catholics. With honesty and humility, we can join towards the restoration of trust in ourselves, in each other and in our Church.

This program will provide support and assistance to parishioners as they and the Church come to terms with the past, as they seek to understand sexual violence, and create an environment that is safe and welcoming to those who have been victimized. This goal will be achieved through the dissemination of information, educating our community and providing opportunities for people to be heard.

This initiative identifies three primary stakeholders, the victims of the allegation or violation of The Standards of Ministerial Behaviors and Boundaries, parishioners who include school and Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) families and the priests on administrative leave. And, care is taken to address their unique needs during this process.

To provide clarity and for purposes of responding to the initial shock that may be felt by many, when the final resolution of cases of priests on administrative leave will be announced, the plan was devised to consist of the following four phases: Phase I—the first five days; Phase II—the next two weeks; Phase III—the first six months; and Phase IV—long term.

The first two phases provide an opportunity to disseminate information: empower parishioners and parish leadership; provide opportunity for parishioners to react to the announcements. In phase three the initiative allows a much more concerted effort for to identify the harms, identify needs and join parishioners and staff in these issues as a community of faith.

It is hoped that through the implementation of this systematic model, we can begin this journey together with honesty and humility toward the restoration of trust in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, our Church.