



Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Archbishop
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

January 3, 2014

TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

Dear friends in Christ,

On December 26, Pennsylvania's Superior Court unanimously reversed the 2012 conviction of Msgr. William Lynn on a charge of endangering the welfare of children. At my direction, the Archdiocese has provided 10 percent of Msgr. Lynn's bail – \$25,000 – to assist his release from prison. Msgr. Lynn is free but constrained by a number of court restrictions pending an appeal of the reversal by civil authorities to the commonwealth's Supreme Court.

Msgr. Lynn remains on administrative leave. As such, he may not function publicly as a priest.

The Superior Court ruling does not vindicate Msgr. Lynn's past decisions. Nor does it absolve the Archdiocese from deeply flawed thinking and actions in the past that resulted in bitter suffering for victims of sexual abuse and their families. Above all, it does not and cannot erase the Archdiocese's duty to help survivors heal. We remain committed to that healing – now and in the future.

For the past three years the Archdiocese has worked vigorously to reform the way it protects the children and families it serves. New policies and procedures, new standards of ministerial behavior, new Archdiocesan Review Board members, mandated reporter training for thousands of volunteers, clergy and staff: All these things are a matter of public record. Throughout the trial of Msgr. Lynn, the Archdiocese cooperated fully and honestly with law enforcement and the court. And that cooperation will continue, whatever the final outcome of Msgr. Lynn's case. We cannot change the past. But we can and will do everything in our power to prevent it from being repeated.

I understand and accept the anger felt toward the Archdiocese by many of our people and priests, as well as the general public, for the ugly events of the past decade. Only time and a record of honest conversion by the Archdiocese can change that. Msgr. Lynn has already spent 18 months in prison on a conviction which Pennsylvania's state appellate court has reversed – unanimously – as “fundamentally flawed.” This reversal is not a matter of technicalities but of legal substance. That is

made very clear in the text of the Superior Court's decision.

Msgr. Lynn presents no danger to anyone. He poses no flight risk. The funding for his bail has been taken from no parish, school or ministry resources, impacts no ongoing work of the Church and will be returned when the terms of bail are completed. *Nor does it diminish in any way* our determination to root out the possibility of sexual abuse from the life of our local Church.

As a result, I believe that assisting Msgr. Lynn's family and attorney with resources for his bail is both reasonable and just. We have acted accordingly.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,

+Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Philadelphia