

# Statement of the Roman Catholic Bishops of New Jersey



**August 15, 2018**

New Jersey's Roman Catholic Bishops acknowledge that media accounts of the details contained in Pennsylvania's grand jury report show a heartbreaking departure from our fundamental belief in the dignity and value of every child. As a Church, our calling remains unchanged - to help children in our care encounter leaders who exemplify God's commandment to love and protect the most vulnerable.

As Bishops, we hold that every parent and every child deserve a safe environment to learn and explore their faith. Every space where teaching, worship, and ministry take place must provide this safe environment. There must be no compromise on this principle. The children entrusted to our care are treasures.

We cannot undo the actions of the past, but we shall remain vigilant to ensure that not one child will ever be abused on our watch.

New Jersey's Catholic dioceses have conducted some 380,000 criminal background checks of all diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors. In addition, all Catholic dioceses have integrated a comprehensive program of reporting abuse to civil authorities, compensating and counseling victims, and implementing rigorous protocols and training for more than 2.3 million clergy, employees, volunteers and children.

We thank law enforcement agencies, child protection advocates and victims themselves who have helped us move beyond compliance to creating the safest environments for learning and worship. We are deeply thankful for those who have joined our efforts to extend both healing and hope to every victim and their family. We renew our commitment to foster healing and seek forgiveness.

We urge anyone who was abused by clergy to come forward to civil authorities.

**Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.**  
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Newark

**Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M.**  
Bishop, Diocese of Trenton

**Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan**  
Bishop, Diocese of Camden

**Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli**  
Bishop, Diocese of Paterson

**Most Reverend James F. Checchio**  
Bishop, Diocese of Metuchen