News



Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York is pictured in a Feb. 22 photo. (CNS/Paul Haring)

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New York — December 12, 2017

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The Archdiocese of New York has resolved claims from 189 victims of clergy sexual abuse in the amount of $40 million.

The figure was contained in a report released Dec. 7 under the archdiocese's Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program.

The program is part of the archdiocese's continuing effort to renew its contrition to those who suffered sexual abuse as a minor by a priest or deacon and to bring a sense of healing to victim-survivors.

The report said the archdiocese was grateful to the more than 200 victim-survivors who stepped forward to participate in the program. The archdiocese also renewed "our sorrow and shame at what they were forced to endure" in the document.

The report outlined the program's progress and reviewed steps the archdiocese made in dealing "vigorously" with clergy accused of abuse and preventing acts of abuse through the safe environment programs.

Although enrollment in the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program has ended, the archdiocese said claims remained to be processed and that final outcomes in the claims will be made in the coming months.

Throughout the process, victim-survivors made clear they were not solely interested in money, but instead were seeking a tangible sign of the church's desire for healing and reconciliation, according to the archdiocese.

"The archdiocese prays that this outreach helps bring peace and consolation to victim-survivors who have experienced the horror of abuse and is grateful that many report such healing," the archdiocese said.

Compensation under the IRCP is being funded through a long-term loan. The archdiocese said it did not and would not use money donated to parishes, schools or charitable organizations, nor money given to the Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal, the Renew + Rebuild capital campaign, or money given by donors to fund specific programs, apostolates or ministries for compensation.

The New York Archdiocese acknowledged that during the last two decades, the U.S. Catholic Church has made documented progress in dealing with the crime of sexual abuse. This has happened especially since the implementation of the U.S. bishops' landmark 2002 "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," which calls for zero tolerance for guilty clergy, with removal from all ministry; full cooperation with law enforcement; public announcement of offenders; comprehensive child safety education, with ongoing monitoring of compliance of safe environment; and background checks.

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The charter was updated in 2005. Also approved in 2002 by the bishops was a companion document called the "Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing With Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons," which established legal procedures under church law for applying charter policies. The norms were updated in 2006. The charter and norms have Vatican approval.

The report from the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program also outlined procedures under its child protection program and its policy on sexual misconduct, which was updated in 2016.