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WILMINGTON, Del. — November 2, 2018
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The Delaware Department of Justice announced Nov. 1 it has opened an investigation into potential criminal conduct by priests or other church personnel of the Wilmington Diocese, according to a statement.

The purpose of the review is to determine whether there are any prosecutable criminal cases that may have not come to light in previous reviews of information provided by the diocese, according to the written statement.

A department spokesperson declined to offer additional comment to The Dialog, Wilmington's diocesan newspaper.

The diocese confirmed receipt of a subpoena in September asking for records dating back to 1955.

"We welcome this investigation and are fully cooperating," it said in a statement.

"The files requested by the attorney general include the files of abusive priests that were made public six years ago in accordance with the non-monetary provisions of the diocesan bankruptcy settlement," the diocese said. "These files are available through various online sources. Twelve years ago, the names of all known abusive priests were also made public.

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"In April 2002," it continued, "diocesan officials met with the Delaware attorney general and disclosed all reports of abuse the diocese had received up to that time, and cooperated fully in the ensuing investigation undertaken by the Department of Justice. The Diocese of Wilmington has not had a credible reported instance of the sexual abuse of a child by anyone in diocesan or parish ministry in more than 25 years."

Diocesan officials said they "are confident that with our safe environment and reporting policies and our continued vigilance, we will continue to ensure that our parishes and schools are safe and sacred spaces."

"We encourage anyone who has been sexually abused by a member of the clergy or anyone else, to immediately notify local law enforcement authorities," the statement said.

The Delaware Department of Justice said it had "reviewed some records provided by the diocese in the timeframe of 2002 to 2004, but issued a subpoena approximately seven weeks ago in light of the disclosures in investigations by other jurisdictions."

The Delaware agency has asked potential victims of abuse by diocesan personnel to contact (302) 577-5293 or ReportAbuse@state.de.us to provide information to prosecutors and investigators as part of its review.