News



by Catholic News Service

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California Attorney General Xavier Becerra has opened an investigation into how the state's 12 Catholic dioceses have addressed allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests, lay church employees and volunteers.

In a May 2 letter to each diocese, Becerra requests church officials to preserve all documents related to abuse allegations.

The Los Angeles Archdiocese was among those receiving the letter, Angelus, the news outlet of the archdiocese, reported.

"The California Department of Justice is conducting a review of your archdiocese's handling of sexual misconduct allegations involving children, including whether your archdiocese has adequately reported allegations of sexual misconduct, as required under California's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act," the letter said.

Archdiocesan spokeswoman Carolina Guevara said "the archdiocese has not officially received the letter from the attorney general, however, we will be responding cooperatively as we have with the past three grand jury investigations of the archdiocese."

The records being requested by Becerra's office include allegations of sexual misconduct received by the dioceses since 1996 — including those handled in

compliance with the law — as well as those of individuals accused of misconduct toward minors who may still be active in ministry.

The letter also asks for records on actions taken by the dioceses against individuals accused of abuse or anyone who may have failed to report sexual abuse allegations to law enforcement.

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In a statement, the archdiocese said it is committed to transparency and "does not tolerate anyone who does harm to a child or vulnerable person." It also said that it had "also already cooperated with two state and one federal investigation and continues to fully cooperate with all civil authorities."

In November, Becerra announced an online reporting form for people who believe they've been abused by clergy members in California. However, similar reporting structures have not yet been launched for abuse allegations against employees of other institutions in the state, such as public school districts.

"To date, the Office of the Attorney General has not informed the archdiocese of any reports made to their online reporting form concerning the Archdiocese of Los Angeles," Guevara added.

The California investigation is similar to other reviews of the Catholic Church being conducted across the country, including in Illinois and Georgia.

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Written by staff members of Angelus, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.