by Archdiocese of Boston

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Editor's Note: *Following is a statement from the Archdiocese of Boston, released to the National Catholic Reporter's podcast The Vatican Briefing. It was given in response to an interview on the podcast with Anne Barrett Doyle, co-director of BishopAccountability.org.*

Cardinal Seán has consistently demonstrated a commitment to be open, receptive, and supportive of survivors in the Archdiocese of Boston. From the earliest days of the crisis, the Cardinal has acknowledged the failings of the Church, often crediting survivors with having the courage to come forward to hold the Church accountable. He has credited the media with forcing the Church to be transparent and to effect change.

The Cardinal has implemented significant reforms and procedures to safeguard children, hold offenders accountable, support survivors and provide for healing. He has personally acknowledged the critically important work of survivors, clergy, religious, laity, law enforcement and many others who contribute to holding the Church accountable and helping guide the response to survivors and their loved ones.

Boston was among the first dioceses to publish a list of credibly accused clergy and disclose financial statements including source and use of the funding related to abuse. The Archdiocese's annual financial report includes the resolution of the claims received each year. In addition to providing settlements, the Archdiocese is one of the few dioceses to pay for ongoing psychological help for victim survivors and their families. We have spent more than $200 million in direct settlement payments as well as on psychological help and professional support services for

survivors on an ongoing basis. The Archdiocese's prevention efforts are substantial and include: more than 50,000 annual criminal offender background checks of all clergy, employees, and volunteers; training of more than 100,000 adults in Protecting God's Children curriculum since 2002; and teaching more than 130,000 children each year in personal safety through religious education classes and Catholic schools.

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Under the Cardinal, the Archdiocese has had a vigorous policy with respect to disclosing information about clergy accused of abusing minors. All allegations of clergy sexual abuse of minors are immediately reported to law enforcement. The Archdiocese publicly discloses when a member of its clergy is removed from active ministry, pending an investigation into an allegation of child abuse. The Archdiocese publicly discloses when a member of its clergy is convicted of sexual abuse of a child as a result of a criminal process, or when, after a canonical process, a member of the clergy is removed from the clerical state.

Cardinal Seán has personally met with hundreds of survivors of clergy abuse and continues to meet with survivors on a monthly basis. For more than ten years, the Cardinal has been advisor to the Holy Father, including occasions of strongly advocating for a change of Vatican policies and procedures in responding to victims.

The Cardinal believes the Church must continue to ask for forgiveness and confirm its commitment to prevention and healing by way of actions. This essential work must be ongoing at all times. It is Cardinal Seán's hope that society at large can join in the mission of supporting survivors and implementing continuously strengthened programs for prevention and protection.