

Message from Bishop Bruce A. Lewandowski, C.Ss.R.



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are anticipating the release of the Rhode Island Attorney General's report on his six-and-a-half-year historical review of clergy sexual abuse in Rhode Island dating back to 1950. Our diocese entered into this review voluntarily in 2019 in the interest of transparency and so that broader societal good could come from our experience, from the failures and successes of the past.

The report does not contain any new cases of abuse and much of its content has already been widely publicized in the media over the decades. For many, this report will undoubtedly be a difficult and painful retelling of historical cases of abuse in our diocese. Catholics and members of the wider community alike have understandably been scandalized, demoralized, and angered by these heinous sins and crimes of the past.

I take this opportunity to apologize to the victim-survivors for the failures of Church personnel and others in past decades to protect them and keep them safe. I pledge to continue our support for them through our Office of Outreach and Victim Assistance programs.

I am confident that our diocese has robust and effective policies and practices in place. We have a sacred duty to protect children and vulnerable people. I take this responsibility very seriously. Our diocese meets and exceeds its obligations under the law in reporting allegations, cooperating with law enforcement, transparency, and most importantly ensuring safe environments for children in our parishes, schools, and ministries—which are thriving.

There are no accusations against clergy who are in active ministry today. Our clergy in Rhode Island are good and holy men, serving with devotion, and giving their lives to Christ and His Church. I am grateful to them for their witness and their ministry.

We will have additional information to share with you when the report is made available to the public by the Attorney General. Until then, know that I am praying for healing for victim-survivors who suffered grievously from clergy sexual abuse, and praying, too, for our diocese and the Church. I invite you to also join me in praying earnestly for these intentions. May God bless you all.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,
Most Rev. Bruce A. Lewandowski, C.Ss.R.
Bishop of Providence