



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office of
The Archbishop

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 218 (Gonzalez, D-San Diego) on Sunday October 13, 2019, a bill that opens a window for three years to allow decades-old lawsuits to be brought against public and private entities.

Our Church has confronted this issue of child sexual abuse for more than two decades now. This has been a sad and shameful chapter in our history as a Church, but it has also been a time of reform and a time for providing much needed support for victim-survivors of abuse.

The Church in California cooperated with then-Governor Gray Davis and the legislature during the previous opening of the statute of limitations in 2003. Since then, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and other dioceses in the state have continued to provide pastoral care and financial support for victim-survivors, no matter when that abuse occurred. And we will continue to do so.

Earlier this year, as part of our commitment to victim-survivors, the Archdiocese decided to take part in the new Independent Compensation Program (ICP) for victims of sexual abuse by diocesan clergy as minors, again no matter when the abuse occurred. The program was launched last month and serves all victims of abuse, including those who may be reluctant to come to the Church for assistance and would prefer to seek redress and healing through an independent program.

We encourage those who have been abused by diocesan priests in our Archdiocese or in the dioceses of Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Fresno and Sacramento, to seek assistance through the Independent Compensation Program at <https://www.californiadiocesesicp.com>.

Here in Los Angeles, we will continue to cooperate with the Governor and the legislature in accordance with this new law. The Archdiocese settled the previous claims that came forward after the removal of the statute of limitations in 2003 by using unrestricted funds from the Archdiocesan Catholic Center, the sale of surplus properties, a bank loan, and substantial payments from commercial insurance, with the understanding that the insurance companies would pay those claims, but there would be no coverage for future abuse claims. No parish, designated, or restricted funds were used.

Since the 2007 global settlement, the Archdiocese has set aside funds in a risk management program which are intended to be available to help defray the cost of future settlements under AB 218 and under the ICP. As was the case in 2007, we will not pay for these settlements from parish funds, donations to our *Together in Mission* appeal, our *Called to Renew* capital campaign, or other donor-designated gifts.

It is our hope that all victim-survivors of childhood sexual abuse in all institutional settings will be able to have their pain and suffering addressed and resolved. We pray that AB 218 will be a step forward in that direction.

It is also important to note that, as we seek to heal the wounds of the past, we have put in place effective systems for the protection of children. As a result, new cases of abuse are rare today in the Church in Los Angeles and in the Church statewide. For more information on the abuse prevention and protection efforts of the Archdiocese and our outreach and support for victim survivors, please visit www.protect.la-archdiocese.org.

Again, I want to apologize to all victims of priest sexual abuse and express my deep sorrow and regret for our past failures and the trust that was broken. I realize, as you do, that no program, however well-intentioned and well-designed, can repair the damage done to victims and their families. But I pray that this new program, and this new law, might provide another avenue toward healing and hope.

May we find hope in Jesus Christ, may the Blessed Virgin Mary be a mother to us all, and may God grant us peace,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles