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Office of the Bishop

December 3, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

During this season of Advent, as you prepare to welcome Jesus into your hearts and homes, I pray that you are filled with joyful expectation and much hope at His coming. May Emmanuel – God With Us – light and guide our ways to heaven and lasting peace.

First, I want you to know that my heart continues to grieve for the victims of childhood sexual abuse, especially those abused by clergy, the very people who were ordained to guide them to a life of holiness.

Secondly, as promised when I announced the establishment of the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP) which was designed to assist victims/survivors of childhood sexual abuse, I am following up with you regarding the final report that was delivered to me this week. The Kenneth Feinberg Law Offices of Washington, D.C., which is internationally known for its mediation work, carefully evaluated all claims made to the Fund. The Feinberg firm, which operated independently from the diocese, had sole discretion in deciding how much compensation each claimant should receive.

Through the IRCP, more than \$19 million has been distributed among claimants in cases that occurred over many decades ago, mostly prior to 1990. It is my hope that this compensation will provide support for victims/survivors on their path toward healing.

As I have said before, the money for this compensation fund came from a number of sources within the church. Sources such as the sale of historical assets, insurance reserves and other means within the church. The money for this compensation did not come from parishes, schools, from the sale of parish assets, or from *Our Campaign for the Church Alive!*

For more information about the IRCP, including a FAQ, please visit the diocesan website at diopitt.org.

Although this is the end of the fund, there will be no end to my and our diocese's commitment to protect young people from abuse and to reach out with care and concern to anyone who has been harmed. It is my responsibility to be vigilant in the care of all of our people, ensuring that our parishes and schools are places of safe environment and our leaders, both clergy and laity, are people committed to the protection of all God's people.

In closing, I humbly ask you to join me in praying for all those wounded by sexual abuse. We all need to listen to those who have suffered from abuse and offer them reassurance and comfort. I want you to know that I work daily to defend and safeguard the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of every person entrusted to my care. Please also pray for me and all our clergy, who work so hard to be faithful to our call to serve you with care.

Grateful for our continued efforts together in being *On Mission for The Church Alive!*, and for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,

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Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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