



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

• P.O. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003 •

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Press Release

Statement of Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

The Diocese learned from media sources today that the Attorney General of the State of West Virginia, filed a civil lawsuit in the Circuit Court of Wood County, West Virginia, alleging that the Diocese has violated the West Virginia Consumer Credit and Protection Act. The Complaint is based in part on information included in the Diocese's November 2018 public disclosure of clergy credibly accused of child sexual abuse and on other information provided by the Diocese to the Attorney General over the past five months. The November disclosure by the Diocese contains details concerning both the dates of the alleged occurrences and the dates they were actually reported to the Diocese, which in many cases were decades later. Further, some of the allegations of misconduct contained in the Attorney General's Complaint occurred more than 50 years ago and some are not accurately described.

The Diocese will address the litigation in the appropriate forum. However, the Diocese strongly and unconditionally rejects the Complaint's assertion that the Diocese is not wholly committed to the protection of children, as reflected in its rigorous Safe Environment Program, the foundation of which is a zero tolerance policy for any cleric, employee or volunteer credibly accused of abuse. The Program employs mandatory screening, background checks and training for all employees and volunteers who work with children.

The Diocese also does not believe that the allegations contained in the Complaint fairly portray its overall contributions to the education of children in West Virginia nor fairly portray the efforts of its hundreds of employees and clergy who work every day to deliver quality education in West Virginia.

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