



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 16, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters of the Archdiocese of Denver,

Today, the Oversight Committee of the Independent Reconciliation and Reparations Program (Program) [released an interim summary](#) of the program's work, including statistical information and the Committee members' thoughts on the effectiveness of the process.

When the three dioceses in Colorado announced this program in 2019, our sincere hope was that any survivor who had not previously come forward would do so, and any survivor who hadn't previously received compensation from the Archdiocese would have that opportunity through a simple and non-adversarial process.

As part of what was reported by the Oversight Committee today, the Program received 66 claims involving allegations of abuse by Archdiocesan priests, of which 56 were deemed eligible by the program administrators. 52 of those survivors have accepted the reparations offered by the administrators and been paid by the Archdiocese. To date, no victim has rejected the program's offer to them. Four offers remain pending. Of the 56 survivors deemed eligible by the administrators, approximately half came forward for the first time.

To all of the survivors who came forward and participated in the Program: I have met with all of you who requested a meeting in which I could offer an apology to you in person, and will meet with anyone else should you desire to do so. I know others have chosen a different path for healing and I, of course, respect your wishes. Please know, on behalf of myself and the Church, I am deeply sorry for the pain and hurt that was caused by the abuse you suffered. I remain steadfastly committed to meeting with any survivor who desires to meet with me and doing everything I can so that the problems of the past never repeat themselves. I know that money cannot fully heal the wounds you suffered, but hope that those of you who came forward felt heard, acknowledged, and that the reparations offer a measure of justice and access to resources.

And, to those survivors who still have not come forward: while the claims period to seek help through the reparations program is now closed, the ability to seek help and support from the Archdiocese remains open. I encourage you to come forward and to report your abuse to law enforcement and then to our [Office of Child and Youth Protection](#). Even if you do not wish to receive assistance from the Archdiocese, we can help you find other resources that will provide the assistance you need.

Importantly, all allegations made by victims as part of the Program had to be reported to local authorities, and the information was also provided to the Attorney General (Phil Weiser) and the Special Master (Robert Troyer), who with the Church's support and active participation previously studied and issued a report in 2019 on the sexual abuse of minors within the Catholic Church in Colorado. We know that some substantiated allegations in the Program were made against priests not previously identified in the prior report. From the outset of our cooperation with the Attorney General, I have pledged transparency, and it was always anticipated that there would need to be a supplement to the Special Master's report to capture information that came forward as a result of the Program. Consistent with my pledge of transparency, the identity of priests who were accused of wrongdoing in the Program process where those allegations were deemed substantiated, as determined by the Special Master and

Attorney General, will be included in an addendum prepared by the Special Master, which is presently anticipated in November.

None of the survivors who participated in the Program reported abuse in the last 20 years—meaning that the abuse alleged in the Program, like that set out in the Special Master’s original report, involves incidents that occurred decades ago.

As the Program is winding down, I would like to again thank Senator Hank Brown, the Honorable Jeanne Smith, retired Judge David Crockenberg, victims advocate Nancy Feldman, and community leader Laura Morales for their time and effort in over-seeing this program. I would also like to thank program administrators Kenneth Feinberg and Camille Biros and their team for their work with the survivors, especially during the middle of a pandemic. Like the Committee, we are glad this outreach to survivors has been able to reach so many survivors in such a short period of time, and without the adversity and pressures placed on survivors by our civil justice system.

I also want to reiterate the promises I have made to everyone in our Archdiocese. This independent program and the independent review conducted by the dioceses in Colorado in cooperation with the Attorney General have put a spotlight on a horrifying chapter in our history, but it has also shown that the steps we have taken over the past 30 years—including our training and empowerment of thousands of faithful parishioners and volunteers across the Archdiocese—have been effective. Most of all, it has taught us to be open and care for victims of abuse as they deem best, and to always be vigilant to make sure the Church is a safe place.

Today, I am confident that the work and commitment of our priests, deacons, employees and volunteers are making our Churches and schools among the safest places in our state for children. However, this process continues to remind us that we can never be complacent, that evil lurks in all corners of our society, and that we must always work to stamp out those who wish to do harm and violate the trust of our children. This work has undoubtedly reaffirmed our resolve to do everything we can to protect children in our Church and beyond.

Please join me in praying for all survivors of abuse, and for continued healing for them, their families, and our Church.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Samuel J. Aquila". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila