



DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 25, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, the Attorney General of Michigan, after nearly 8 years of investigation, has released their report concerning allegations of sexual abuse in our Diocese, looking at a period spanning more than 75 years. Every diocese in the State of Michigan has been involved in this investigation. We are the sixth of seven reports released by the AG.

It's important to know that at every step of the process, we, like all the other Dioceses in Michigan, have fully cooperated with the AG office since launching its investigation in 2018.

We fully believe in greater accountability and transparency, which is essential in restoring the trust that has been broken resulting from the misconduct of a few.

As Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, I want to express my deepest sorrows to those who have been victims of abuse by members of the clergy. Please accept my sincere apology for the pain and suffering you have experienced by those who were entrusted with your care. I'm deeply saddened by it all. And, again, I apologize to you on behalf of the Church and our Diocese.

The Investigation

Looking more closely at the Attorney General's report, one purpose of this investigation was to determine whether criminal charges could be filed against those who allegedly engaged in potentially criminal conduct or those who failed to comply with a statutory obligation to report conduct involving minors.

In addressing this purpose, the AG Report states, "The Attorney General has not filed criminal charges against any of the priests in the Diocese of Saginaw as a result of this investigation." In addition, the report states "there is no indication that the Diocese has violated Michigan's reporting obligations to report the sexual abuse of minors..."

It is also important to note that not all allegations written into the AG report could be established as credible because they could not be fully investigated. It should also be noted that the AG went beyond the scope of the purpose and intent of the original investigation, and unfortunately, included information about scandalous behavior between consenting adults.

Another purpose of the investigation was to determine if the Michigan dioceses were complying with their statutory obligation to report the sexual abuse of minors. The Attorney General's report recognizes the Saginaw Diocese's compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002.

The report states: "*Consistent with this Charter, the Diocese of Saginaw has instituted a 'safe environment program' to protect children from sexual abuse.*"

During the 75-year period in the report, more than 680 priests served in our diocese. The report details the reported abuse of 104 victims by 37 priests and one deacon. For the 37 priests and one deacon, 30 are known or presumed to be dead. For the eight who are living or presumed to be living, none are in active ministry.

For the 37 priests and one deacon, other than a few entries, conduct as alleged that may have violated Michigan criminal law all occurred before 2002, the year of the U.S. Bishops' Charter. The vast majority of reported abuse cases in our diocese are very old, with most occurring in the 1970s and 1980s.

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

It's clear that the Catholic Church in the United States has made significant progress over the last 20-plus years in putting safeguards in place to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw is working to create and maintain a safe environment for those who are vulnerable.

In addition, each Diocese is audited annually by the USCCB through a third-party auditor, with an on-site audit every three years. In Saginaw, our last on-site audit was in July 2024. Because we take protecting young people seriously, we ensure that the necessary steps are taken to create and maintain a safe environment for all. Each year we have been found to be in compliance with all Articles of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Our next on-site audit will take place in the summer/fall of 2027.

Safe Environment

Our Diocese requires mandatory Safe Environment training and background checks for all employees and volunteers who have contact with minors. Training includes recognizing signs of abuse, as well as mandated Safe Environment training, which must be renewed every five years. In addition, all employees must comply with monthly Protecting God's Children training bulletins from VIRTUS, regardless of whether they work with children or not.

Since 2020, we have trained 5,174 people in this program.

The in-person safe environment facilitated training sessions are also available to the public, free of charge and held throughout the Diocese.

Review Board

Every diocese in the country is required to have its own Diocesan Review Board. This is an independent consultative body that advises me on allegations of clergy abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, ensuring that they are handled with integrity. The Review Board also discusses safe environment matters, regularly reviewing our safe environment policies to ensure they remain strong and effective. We meet on a quarterly basis, and more often if needed.

The bottom line is that we want every parish, school, and ministry to be places where everyone feels safe, respected, and loved.

Since my time as the bishop of this diocese, I have always been open to meeting with victim survivors and their families and will continue to do so when requested. Annually, I celebrate a Mass of Atonement at the Cathedral as a sign of repentance, making reparation for the sins of clergy who have abused their power and authority allowing children to be harmed. In this Mass, we also pray in a special way for all victims – children, young people, and adults – who have suffered any abuse at the hands of clergy and any other church personnel.

Yes, this has been and is a tragic period in the life and history of the Church; many would say, the greatest scandal in the history of the American Catholic Church.

Much has been done in changing the culture in the Church and protecting children, but we also know that the evil of abuse continues in our society.

We must accept our personal and collective responsibility for protecting children and others and continue to remain vigilant in our response in protecting our young people and vulnerable adults.

As a wounded and broken Church, as wounded and broken members of the Body of Christ, we are invited to turn to the cross of Jesus Christ – that place of healing, mercy and love. In doing so, we will clearly see the wounds of Jesus. These wounds of Jesus are a rendezvous place where God meets us, a place where hope and healing become our new reality; a place where we are loved forever despite our sinfulness, despite our brokenness.

In conclusion, no single statement can ever make up for the painful abuse of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. But as people of faith, we know that through Christ's suffering, death and resurrection, we can find hope beyond measure as we move toward a brighter future.

Clearly, we are a different Church today because of those who have and continue to courageously share their stories, so that the sins and crimes which damaged the Body of Christ could be addressed. But we also mourn those who have been abused and have been driven from the Church because of what has happened to them. We continue to pray for their healing and return.

May the Lord Jesus heal the pain of those who have suffered, bring mercy to the sinner, strengthen all of us to walk together in faith and so reflect His life and love, thus bearing new life in our Church and in the world.

Peace in Christ,



Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw

To Report Abuse

Any person with reasonable cause to suspect the sexual abuse of a minor by a member of the clergy, or by any person acting in the name of the Catholic Church, is urged to file a complaint with the Attorney General at 844-324-3374.

If you are a survivor of sexual abuse, either as a child or an adult, by someone representing the Catholic Church, we urge you to contact the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred. The Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to help survivors make a formal complaint and obtain support. To contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator: Call: 989-797-6682, email: victim.assistance@diosag.org, or write to: Diocese of Saginaw Attn: Victim Assistance Coordinator, 5800 Weiss St., Saginaw, MI 48603. Our diocese accepts and responds to all reports.