



## MONSIGNOR CHARLES V. ANTONICELLI MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

Dear Friends,

*Earlier today, on behalf of His Eminence, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, I shared the following letter and materials with priests of the Archdiocese of Washington. I thought you would find it helpful, and share the letter and materials below.*

Over the past two weeks, I have shared several communications with you regarding the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report. As Cardinal Wuerl noted at yesterday's Mass for Healing at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew, all must know the Church's contrition and remorse for these grave sins. Survivors of this great betrayal by priests must know of the prayers of the Church for healing and our steadfast commitment to protect all of those entrusted to our care.

That said, the report is also flawed. The grand jury process in Pennsylvania was not an evidentiary proceeding, and did not allow those named in the report the opportunity to provide evidence that would counter the claims in the report. Indeed, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court will hear oral argument in September about these very issues and has already noted in its preliminary rulings its concerns about the process.

Over the past ten days, there has not been an opportunity to share in a constructive manner a response regarding Cardinal Wuerl's record as Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh from 1988 to 2006. The linked documents – [a fact sheet](#) and a [timeline](#) – are intended to start that process. These documents provide facts on Cardinal Wuerl's record during his tenure in Pittsburgh that were either mischaracterized or simply not included in the report.

While there will always be context, the basic facts are incontrovertible. Cardinal Wuerl between 1988 and 2004 dealt with allegations against 32 priests with claims of child sexual abuse against them.

- 18 priests were removed from ministry.
- 13 priests were either dead or removed from ministry when Bishop Wuerl arrived in 1988.
- 1 priest had a claim against him that was nonphysical in nature and anonymous and not found to be credible.
- There was never a policy or process to transfer priests with claims against them, and Cardinal Wuerl denied numerous requests by priests withdrawn from ministry to return.
- In the end, while there may be individual cases that might have been evaluated differently today, Cardinal Wuerl did his best to do the right thing and always worked to ensure children were never harmed.

The facts confirm that he removed priests from ministry upon claims of abuse, was a leader in child protection and took significant steps to assist survivors.

As well, the Secretariat for Communications has placed a [page on the Archdiocese of Washington website](#) that has a number of documents and articles on these issues. The most important is Cardinal Wuerl's statement to the grand jury, which provides greater details on many of the issues under discussion today.

Thank you for your service to God's people.

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Monsignor Charles V. Antonicelli  
Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia