

**STATEMENT FROM CARDINAL ROGER M. MAHONY REGARDING  
SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS BY CLERGY**

**Cardinal Roger M. Mahony  
Archbishop Emeritus of Los Angeles  
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With the upcoming release of priests' personnel files in the Archdiocese's long struggle with the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy, my thoughts and prayers turn toward the victims of this sinful abuse.

Various steps toward safeguarding all children in the Church began here in 1987 and progressed year by year as we learned more about those who abused and the ineffectiveness of so-called "treatments" at the time. Nonetheless, even as we began to confront the problem, I remained naïve myself about the full and lasting impact these horrible acts would have on the lives of those who were abused by men who were supposed to be their spiritual guides. That fuller awareness came for me when I began visiting personally with victims. During 2006, 2007 and 2008, I held personal visits with some 90 such victims.

Those visits were heart-wrenching experiences for me as I listened to the victims describe how they had their childhood and innocence stolen from them by clergy and by the Church. At times we cried together, we prayed together, we spent quiet moments in remembrance of their dreadful experience; at times the victims vented their pent up anger and frustration against me and the Church.

Toward the end of our visits I would offer the victims my personal apology—and took full responsibility—for my own failure to protect fully the children and youth entrusted into my care. I apologized for all of us in the Church for the years when ignorance, bad decisions and moral failings resulted in the unintended consequences of more being done to protect the Church—and even the clergy perpetrators—than was done to protect our children.

I have a 3 x 5 card for every victim I met with on the altar of my small chapel. I pray for them every single day. As I thumb through those cards I often pause as I am reminded of each personal story and the anguish that accompanies that life story.

The cards contain the name of each victim since each one is precious in God's eyes and deserving of my own prayer and sacrifices for them. But I also list in parenthesis the name of the clergy perpetrator lest I forget that real priests created this appalling harm in the lives of innocent young people.

It remains my daily and fervent prayer that God's grace will flood the heart and soul of each victim, and that their life-journey continues forward with ever greater healing.

I am sorry.

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