



7.26.2018

**Statement from Bishop Lawrence Persico regarding letter to Pope Francis**

*In response to Attorney General Joshua Shapiro's letter to Pope Francis asking the Holy Father to direct church leaders to 'follow the path of truth' and abandon efforts to silence survivors, Erie Bishop Lawrence Persico issued the following statement:*

The bishops of all of the Pennsylvania dioceses involved with the grand jury report about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church have indicated publicly that they fully support release of the report. I reiterate that I have neither directly nor indirectly taken any steps to block its release. In addition, since I first indicated that position in a statement on June 20, I have instructed that no funds, resources or personnel of the Diocese of Erie be used to block the release of the grand jury report. The diocese is not paying for, reimbursing or assisting any effort by any entity or individual to seek a stay.

At the same time, I recognize this is a difficult moment for everyone involved. Victims and their advocates have indicated that the delay of the report's release is causing more suffering. After two years preparing the report, the attorney general is understandably frustrated. And we have seen the concerns of the petitioners who feel they have not had due process.

I believe in our legal system and have confidence that those involved understand the urgency and the import of the work that must be accomplished. I am hopeful that the situation will be resolved swiftly and fairly for all involved.

My primary focus remains on victims, who await this important opportunity to be heard.

# # #

**ANNE-MARIE WELSH**  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
Office 814.824.1167  
Cell 814.746.6889  
[amwelsh@ErieRCD.org](mailto:amwelsh@ErieRCD.org)

**MARY SOLBERG**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
Office 814.824.1171  
Cell 814.969.1844  
[msolberg@ErieRCD.org](mailto:msolberg@ErieRCD.org)