



**Statement of the German Bishops  
on the results of the study  
“Sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, deacons and male  
members of orders in the domain of the German Bishops’  
Conference”**

**on the occasion of the Autumn Plenary Assembly of the German Bishops’  
Conference on 27 September 2018 in Fulda**

The focus of our deliberations during the Autumn Plenary Assembly was on the contents of the study "Sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, deacons and male members of orders in the domain of the German Bishops' Conference" (MHG study). The shocking results show us as bishops the responsibility to intensify our activities and the duty to grant those affected justice. They also show institutional failure. We bishops face up to the seriousness of the situation.

The recommendations of the study's research consortium form the basis for our further actions. Some of the recommendations require longer clarification processes, but already now we commit ourselves to take the following steps, which we will implement within a short period of time:

- More than before, we will seek encounters with those affected. We need the help of those affected as well as external experts for the review processes we want to tackle in the dioceses.
- We will develop a standardization as regards the management of the personnel files of clerics.
- In addition to the diocesan contact persons for questions of sexual abuse, we will also offer external, independent contact points.
- In addition, binding supradiocesan monitoring will be established for the areas of intervention and prevention.

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- The procedure on material benefits in recognition of inflicted suffering will be further developed on the basis of the study and of the experience of previous years.
- Without an independent examination there can be no effective change and justice. We want to find out who, beyond the perpetrators, has institutionally borne responsibility for the abuses committed in our Church.

The challenges specific to the Catholic Church, such as the questions of the celibate way of life of priests and various aspects of Catholic sexual morality, will be discussed in a transparent process of dialogue with experts from various disciplines.

We will continuously report on the progress of our projects. We will definitely continue to work together with victims of sexual abuse, external experts and representatives of our lay bodies, especially the Central Committee of German Catholics.

We are grateful for the consultations of the past days and the help of the scientists, the project advisory board and many others who have helped us with their critical questions. We will inform Pope Francis about these conversations. We agree with him that all high-handedness on the part of Church officials must be overcome. What is needed is a new togetherness in the Church.