

# Questions & Answers

## McAfee & Taft Independent Investigation of Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

### **Why did the investigation take so long?**

On August 29, 2018, the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City announced its plan for reviewing and reporting past allegations of abuse by priests, and for retaining McAfee & Taft for the purpose of independently investigating the Archdiocese's handling of these allegations. We had no sense of how many files would actually be produced to us at the time the investigation began. The record review itself was very time-consuming, but as we reviewed records, our independent investigation led us to identify additional tasks, such as witness interviews and additional research. We also requested the Archdiocese allow us to review additional records, and the Archdiocese did not refuse any of our requests to review records in its possession. From the beginning, the Archdiocese made it clear to us it wanted a comprehensive, thorough, independent investigation; McAfee & Taft provided precisely that.

### **How many documents and files were reviewed during the investigation?**

Our investigation included the review of approximately 545 individual priest files, plus thousands of other paper records, including policies, procedures, litigation files, deposition transcripts and other materials. We imaged more than 1 million electronic files that we selectively searched and reviewed. We also interviewed dozens of witnesses and current and former Archdiocesan personnel.

### **How far back in time did the investigation go?**

Priest files and allegations of sexual abuse of minors dating back as early as 1960 were reviewed in our independent investigation, along with files for any person who had been a priest in the Archdiocese at any point from 1960 to the present.

### **How much input did the Archdiocese have into the final Report?**

Twenty-four hours before we released the Report, we allowed several officials of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City (Chancellor Michael Scaperlanda, Communications Director Diane Clay, Vicar General William Novak, and Archbishop Paul Coakley) an opportunity to review a draft of our Report. This review was solely to verify factual matters such as names, dates and titles. The Archdiocese was not asked for and did not provide feedback on substantive matters in our Report.

### **What does McAfee & Taft recommend the Archdiocese do now?**

Our Report includes several recommendations, some of which the Archdiocese has begun to implement. Those recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Engaging a qualified independent investigator to investigate allegations of sexual abuse of minors and report to the Archdiocesan Review Board (which has a majority membership of laypeople) and Archbishop Coakley
- Implementing a written record retention policy and acquiring a more robust recordkeeping system
- Publicly reporting the findings and actions of the Archdiocese when it makes decisions relating to allegations of sexual abuse of minors

### **Will criminal charges be filed regarding any aspects of this Report?**

Decisions about criminal charges are solely the responsibility of law enforcement agencies. It is outside the scope of our investigation to determine if any information warrants further action by law enforcement agencies. We have provided a copy of our Report to the Oklahoma Attorney General.

### **Why are priests who served in Tulsa included in this Report?**

Until 1973, the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City included Tulsa; therefore, allegations from that part of the state were included in our investigation.

### **Why does this Report not go into more detail about the victims in specific cases?**

The purpose of this investigation was to review the Archdiocese's handling and response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests. Although we provide a summary of each of the priests for whom we believe there was sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations, we do not want to inadvertently disclose the identity of any victims or alleged victims. As such, we have omitted certain time periods, locations and other details because we believe providing such information could reveal identifying details about abuse victims.

### **Can an investigation truly be independent if the son of the Archdiocese's current chancellor works at McAfee & Taft?**

Our investigation was independent. Our professional and ethical obligations only allowed our firm to accept this engagement under circumstances that lacked conflicts of interest, and which would assure the independence of the investigation. We restricted access so only the investigative team could view the investigation's files and the records provided by the Archdiocese. Everyone else at our firm – including the son of the Archdiocese's current chancellor – was not able to access or view investigatory materials, work product or the files produced. While the firm represents the Archdiocese in unrelated business and legal matters, we used industry-standard practices to isolate the investigation from other firm activities and personnel.

**I was a victim of abuse. How can I report it?**

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City maintains a hotline for reporting allegations to the Victim Assistance Coordinator at 405-720-9878. The Archdiocese also recommends contacting local law enforcement or the state Department of Human Services at 800-522-3511. More information is available at [archokc.org/safe-environment](http://archokc.org/safe-environment) and at [archokc.org/clergyabusereport](http://archokc.org/clergyabusereport). You may also reach our firm at 405-235-9621 and ask for Ron Shinn if you would prefer to speak with us.

**How much was the firm paid for the investigation?**

It is the firm's policy to not provide financial details of its representations or engagements unless required or obligated to do so under law.

**What will happen to the priests who have been accused of abuse and are still alive?**

It is up to the Archdiocese, hopefully in close consultation with the Archdiocesan Review Board, to determine what steps to take next.

**What about allegations relating to the sexual abuse of vulnerable adults?**

During the course of our investigation, our firm identified allegations of sexual abuse of vulnerable adults, and the Archdiocese also brought allegations to our attention. The Archdiocese has directed that the independent investigator identified in our report should investigate these allegations. The Archdiocese will ultimately decide whether and how it wishes to handle and report any findings relating to these allegations.

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