

Cardinal Reinhard Marx:

Statement on the establishment of the “*Spes et Salus*” Foundation

Sexual abuse in the Church’s area of responsibility is a crime. It destroys people’s lives and is a heavy burden for those directly affected, as well as their family and friends. The church system as a whole is guilty here. Abuse has systemic causes and consequences.

The process of understanding this truth took a while and is still on-going. I myself needed a learning history to be able to grasp and identify the extent and the scale of abuse in the church, and to also identify its systemic causes. It is all the more important to me as a cardinal and as Archbishop of Munich and Freising, and as a private citizen, that I do everything possible to fight against and come to terms with abuse.

For this reason, I have decided to give the majority of my personal assets to “*Spes et Salus*”, the foundation I have established. It will be managed under the umbrella of the archbishopric’s St. Korbinian Foundation, for which I am grateful. The chairman of the “*Spes et Salus*” Foundation’s advisory board will be Prelate Peter Beer, who is intensively involved in this field of work. Those affected by abuse will also be involved on the board.

Throughout my life, I have tried to be responsible with the financial resources given to me as remuneration for my work as institute director, professor and bishop. As a result of this, I have, over the decades, accumulated the not insignificant sum of EUR 500,000, which – I am convinced – should not be used for me, but for the salvation and healing of people.

I would like to use these resources in the interests of the people who have impressed me again and again in recent years: my encounters and conversations with those affected by abuse, and the reports and investigations about their lives and fates made it clear to me how much force must be applied and how much effort is needed to confront and deal with the causes and consequences of abuse. I think of this new foundation as an addition to the Church’s commitment to preventing abuse and to coming to terms with and acknowledging suffering.

It’s clear to me that money won’t heal any wounds. But it can contribute to creating conditions

that facilitate healing and transformation. That's exactly what the name of the foundation I've established should express: *Spes*, the hope that God doesn't abandon people, that he won't leave people alone in their suffering; rather that he continually reaches his hand out to us, meaning that, despite all the negatives, it is possible for something positive to develop in the future. *Salus*, the healing that ultimately only God himself can give; but we can do something to prepare the way for God's works.