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Dear Faith Community of Saint Sabina,

When Father Michael Pfleger agreed to step aside after we received allegations of child sexual abuse against him, he knowingly submitted himself to a process that would involve investigations by both civil and church authorities. Our experience in similar cases has taught us that this work necessarily involves various civil agencies, all of which must be respected before the church conducts its own investigation. While the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is involved, we must also wait for the work of other government agencies to be concluded.

Once the civil authorities complete their work or assure the archdiocese that the church inquiry will not interfere with their probes, we will move forward. The results of all investigations then will be submitted to the Archdiocesan Independent Review Board, which is composed of nine lay persons with a variety of expertise and three clergy persons. The Board conducts its work with thoroughness and impartiality and makes a recommendation to me. My decision will then be made public.

Without question, I realize that waiting for this complex process to unfold is painful for all involved. It has been created, tested and refined over three decades to protect victim/survivors who come forward, as well as those who are praying for the courage to do so. It also protects the rights of those accused and provides reassurance to the community that all allegations are carefully investigated. This last consideration is especially important in cases in which those accused have been exonerated, for it helps provide reassurance about a decision to reinstate them in their ministerial roles. Acting in haste or attempting to interfere by exerting pressure on either civil or church authorities to shortcut their processes serves neither those making the accusations nor those accused.

What we can do during this time, however, is pray for each other and all those involved. I surely am joining in that prayer, which includes your community, knowing that this time of waiting is not easy.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Steve Cardinal Cury*  
Archbishop of Chicago