

Statement of Cardinal O'Brien in Support of the Victims of John Merzbacher

Last week's rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court regarding habeas corpus relief for certain inmates have caused grave concerns and anxiety for the courageous survivors of John Merzbacher, as indicated by the many victims who have contacted us over the past several days.

During my four-plus years as Archbishop of Baltimore, I had the privilege of meeting with several of John Merzbacher's victims and their families, who recounted for me their tragic and painful abuse.

It is clear to me that the abuse they suffered has had an enormous impact on their lives and the lives of their families, and I fear that they will suffer anew if Merzbacher's request to be released is granted.

As I have said before, the substance of Merzbacher's actions, whether he was convicted by a jury or pleads guilty as he now seeks, remains the same—abhorrent and criminal—and justifies the judgment and multiple life sentences he has already received.

The Archdiocese pledges to continue to provide assistance to survivors of John Merzbacher and work with them and with state authorities to ensure that he is never again in a position to cause more harm to those who have already suffered greatly.