



22nd September, 2011

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## **THE CHURCH OFFERS HELP TO THE VICTIMS OF ABUSE**

At a meeting which took place between the Maltese Episcopal Conference and the Conference of the Religious Major Superiors, it was decided to publish this statement:

With reference to the facts and allegations which led to the decision given by the Magistrates' Court some weeks back (which is still pending before the Courts, and hence cannot be prejudiced in any way), the Church authorities in Malta and Gozo, declare that they have been given legal advice, in the sense that, in this particular case, the Church, as an institution, does not have any legal responsibility for what was perpetrated by some individuals and that she cannot take upon herself such responsibility.

However, the Church authorities, without referring to any specific cases, and without prejudice for their position in the civil cases which may arise in the future, and without renouncing for their rights of defence which they can legally present, are taking the necessary steps for the setting up, of their own funds, a structure which will include psychiatric, psychological and social professionals who will provide all the necessary help in their respective field. This applies for every individual who, in any way, is proved to be a victim by individual pastoral functionaries. The Church is doing this as part of her pastoral and spiritual ministry.