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NEWSFLASH: Pope meets abuse victims in Malta

by John L. Allen Jr.

NCR Today

Valletta, Malta -- A Vatican spokesperson confirmed this afternoon that Pope Benedict XVI has had a private meeting with victims of sexual abuse in Malta. It is the pope's third such encounter, after meetings with victims in the United States in April 2008 and, in July of the same year, in Australia.

The victims had previously met with Archbishop Paul Cremona, head of the local Catholic church in Malta, who said earlier today that the church "must be humble enough to recognize the failures and sins of its members."

Vatican spokespersons had consistently said that while a meeting with victims in Malta was possible, it would not be announced beforehand, and had cautioned journalists against creating "great expectations" of such a meeting.

A Vatican statement released today said the pope "was deeply moved by their stories and expressed his shame and sorrow over what victims and their families have suffered."

"He prayed with them and assured them that the Church is doing, and will continue to do, all in its power to investigate allegations, to bring to justice those responsible for abuse and to implement effective measures designed to safeguard young people in the future," the statement said.

See also: [Victim in Malta: Pope had 'tears in his eyes'](#)

More details on the session to follow.

[John Allen is NCR senior correspondent. His e-mail address is jallen@ncronline.org.]

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