



Illinois Catholic Dioceses Publish a Statement and Summary of their Processes for Handling Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors Against Clerics

Chicago, (May 18, 2023) – All Catholic dioceses in Illinois today issued a statement and summary of their common processes for handling allegations of sexual abuse of minors against any Catholic cleric who is ministering or has ministered within their respective boundaries.

The six Catholic dioceses of Illinois include the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the Dioceses of Belleville, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford, and Springfield.

The complete statement and summary are posted on the Archdiocese of Chicago's website: [click here](#).

Archdiocese of Chicago Key Points are as Follows:

For more than 30 years, the Archdiocese of Chicago has been at the forefront of developing and continually improving policies and programs to address the scourge of child sexual abuse and to support survivors.

- **Assistance Ministry**: Since 1991, we have maintained one of the first and largest survivor assistance programs in the nation, providing pastoral assistance to anyone making an allegation, regardless of when the abuse is alleged to have occurred and whether or not the allegation is eventually substantiated.
 - The Office of Assistance Ministry provides pastoral care, support and resources to victim/survivors of clerical sexual abuse, and their loved ones, in their efforts to achieve psychological, emotional and spiritual healing.
 - To date, we have provided assistance for more than 400 survivors and their families.
- **Response to Allegations**: The Archdiocese puts the safety of children first. It reports ALL allegations to civil authorities and submits actionable allegations to its majority lay Independent Review Board. A cleric with even one substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse is forever barred from public ministry.
 - When we learn of alleged child abuse we act promptly, report it to civil authorities, remove the accused from ministry and investigate the allegation. Allegations requiring action (like permanent removal from ministry) are submitted to the Independent Review Board.
 - The overwhelming majority of incidents of abuse in the Archdiocese occurred before the implementation of our 1992 policies, even if the majority of legal claims surfaced much later.
- **Prevention**: The Archdiocese conducts background screenings for employees and volunteers and provides comprehensive safe-environment training programs for adults and children. Last year alone, we trained 112,000 children in an age-appropriate manner on how to recognize, resist and report abusive behavior. To date we have trained more than 263,000 adults in 3,700 training sessions.
- **Ongoing Enhancement**: We continually enhance our programs to take into account developments in law and society and rely on leading experts to advise us on our policies and conduct audits to ensure they are being followed. The changes we have made include:
 - Prior to 2002, all legally mandated reports were made to civil authorities; since 2002, ALL allegations of child abuse have been reported to civil authorities regardless of credibility and regardless of whether there is any legal requirement. The number of allegations of abuse have declined significantly over time.



- Since 2006, we have published the names of all diocesan priests with substantiated allegations of abuse on our website. We recently added the names of deceased diocesan priests and religious order priests who had diocesan ministries and were found to have substantiated allegations by their orders.
- In 2014, we published more than 20,000 documents related to 70 priests with a substantiated allegation of abuse of a minor.

For media questions regarding the Archdiocese of Chicago's processes, please call 312.534.8227 or email: mediarelations@archchicago.org.

About the Archdiocese of Chicago

The Archdiocese of Chicago, the third largest in the United States, serves more than 2.2 million Catholics in 221 parishes in Cook County and Lake County, a geographic area of 1,411 square miles. The Archdiocese, pastored by Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, has more than 15,000 employees in its systems and ministries, including Catholic Charities, the region's largest nonprofit social service agency. The Archdiocese also has one of the country's largest seminaries. The Archdiocese's 155 elementary and secondary schools comprise the largest U.S. private school system. Its schools have received 96 U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Awards.

CONTACT:

Archdiocese of Chicago Media Relations
312.534.8227
mediarelations@archchicago.org

###