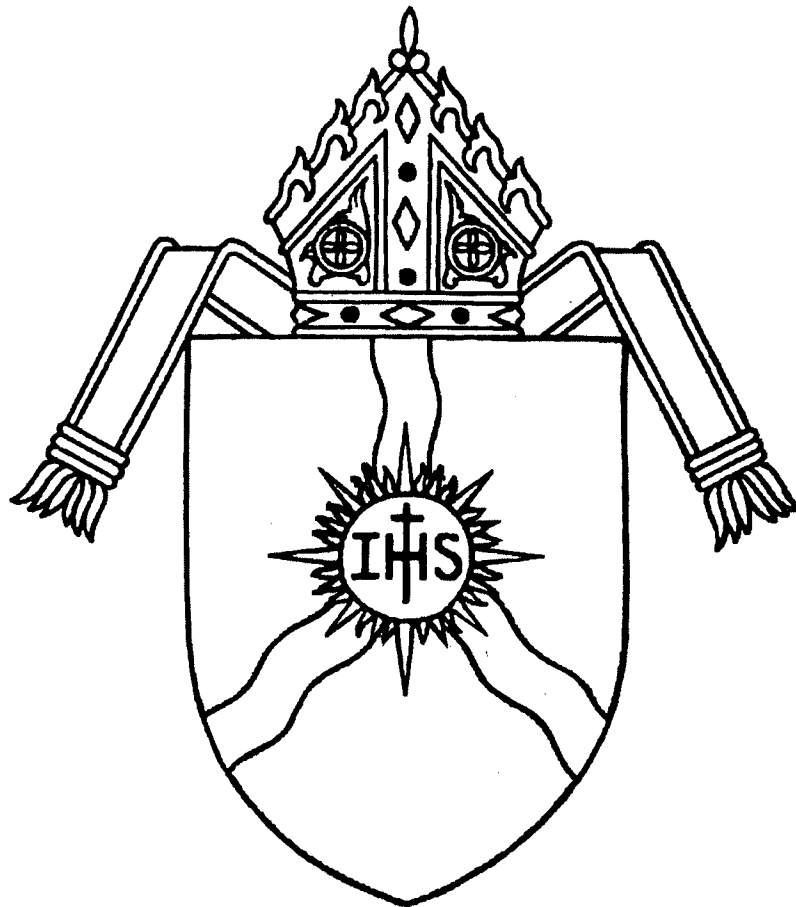


**DIOCESAN POLICY CONCERNING
SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS BY CLERICS,
EMPLOYEES OR COMMISSIONED VOLUNTEERS**



DIocese of SHREVEPORT

Revised September 28, 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preamble	1
§1 GENERAL PROVISIONS	3
<u>Policies:</u>	
1.1. Establishment of the Policy	3
1.2. Funding, Staff and Facilities	3
1.3. Education of Seminarians, Clerics and other Church Personnel	3
1.4. Review and Amendment of Policies and Procedures	4
§2 ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS	5
<u>Policies:</u>	
2.1. Assistance to Victims.....	5
2.2. Victim Assistance Minister.....	5
2.3. Safe Environment Programs	6
2.4. Assistance to Clergy Accused.....	6
2.5. Assistance to Lay Church Workers of the Diocese of Shreveport Who are Accused .	6
§3 SCREENING FORMATION, EDUCATION & ASSIGNMENT TO MINISTRY	7
<u>Policies:</u>	
3.1. Background Checks of Seminarians, Clerics and Lay Church Workers	7
3.2. Assignment and Transfer of Clergy and Lay Workers Outside their Jurisdiction.....	8
3.2.1. Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Shreveport	8
3.2.2. Religious Communities and Clergy of Other Dioceses	8
3.2.3. Transfer of an Accused Lay Worker.....	9
3.3. Religious Personnel	9
3.4. Ministry of Extern Priests	10
3.5. Deacons.....	11
3.5.1. Deacons and Vicar for Clergy.....	11
3.5.2. Diocesan Deacons Accused	11
3.5.3. Extern Deacons Accused	11
3.6. Assignment Review of Priests	11
§4 REVIEW PROCESS FOR CONTINUATION OF MINISTRY	12
<u>Policies:</u>	
4.1. Continuation of Ministry Process	12
4.2. Reporting Requirements, Compliance and Cooperation	12
4.3. Permanent Review Board – Role.....	15
4.3.1. Membership of Permanent Review Board.....	15
4.3.2. Terms of Permanent Review Board Members.....	16
4.3.3. Officers of the Permanent Review Board	16
4.3.4. Permanent Review Board’s Relationship with the Bishop.....	16
4.3.5. Quorum and Permanent Review Board Conduct of Business	16
4.3.6. Permanent Review Board Meetings.....	17
4.3.6.1. Rights of Parties to Meet with the Permanent Review Board	18
4.3.6.2. Individual Rights to Legal/Canonical Counsel	18
4.3.7. Duties of the Permanent Review Board.....	19
4.4. Assessor’s Role.....	19
4.4.1. Qualifications of the Assessor	19

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

4.4.2.	Appointment of the Assessor	20
4.4.3.	Duties of the Assessor.....	20
4.5.	Diocesan “Hot Line” Telephone Number.....	21
4.6.	Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information.....	21
4.7.	Reporting Allegations to Civil Authorities.....	22
4.7.1.	Assessor’s Reporting Responsibilities.....	23
4.7.2.	Preliminary Investigation of Accusations.....	23
4.8.	The Initial Review of Accusation	24
4.8.1.	Outcome of Review Reported to the Bishop	24
4.8.2.	Permanent Review Board’s Specific Recommendations to the Bishop	25
4.8.3.	Preliminary Investigation.....	25
4.9.	Review for Cause by the Permanent Review Board.....	26
4.9.1.	Permanent Review Board’s Determination and Recommendations.....	26
4.9.2.	Who Initiates the Review for Cause	26
4.9.3.	Permanent Review Board’s Determinations and Recommendations	26
4.10.	Administrative Leave for a Cleric.....	27
4.11.	Permanent Review Board: Supplementary Reviews	27
4.11.1.	Questions for Review.....	27
4.11.2.	Who Initiates a Supplementary Review.....	28
4.11.3.	Supplementary Review Determinations	28
4.12.	Monitoring Protocols/Programs for Accused	28
4.12.1.	Cleric Monitoring; Removal of Lay Workers.....	29
4.12.2.	Case by Case Monitoring Programs/Protocols	29
§5 CANONICAL CONSIDERATIONS		30
<u>Policies:</u>		
5.1.	Single Act of Abuse of a Child by a Cleric	30
5.2.	Exercise of an Administrative Act for Removal of a Cleric.....	31
5.3.	Dispensations and Dismissals from the Clerical State.....	32
5.4.	Protection of Rights and Unfounded Allegations	32
5.5.	Cleric’s Failure to Comply.....	32
§6 CLERGY PERSONNEL RECORDS		33
<u>Policies:</u>		
6.1.	Maintaining a Unified Clergy Personnel Record.....	33
6.2.	Seminary Files on Clerics in Diocesan Files	33
6.3.	Confidentiality of Records.....	33
CONCLUSION		34
ENDNOTES.....		35
DIOCESE OF SHREVEPORT: COMMUNICATIONS POLICY CONCERNING SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD		36

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

Code of Pastoral Conduct – Diocese of Shreveport, 2003

Brochure Concerning Reporting Child Sexual Abuse, Diocese of Shreveport, 2003

Promise to Protect; Pledge to Heal, USCCB, 2003

DIOCESE OF SHREVEPORT
DIOCESAN POLICY CONCERNING
SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS BY CLERICS,
EMPLOYEES OR COMMISSIONED VOLUNTEERS
(EDUCATION, PREVENTION,
ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS
AND PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINATION
OF FITNESS FOR MINISTRY)

Preamble

Sacred Scripture teaches that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God¹, from which flows the dignity of the human person.² The Church safeguards and protects this God-given dignity and condemns all forms of abuse or neglect of people of all ages. The policy presented here deals specifically with the sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, deacon, lay person, employee or volunteer as well as the Diocese's obligation to protect children and young people by providing a safe environment in order to prevent sexual abuse.

Since January 27, 1991, in order to deal with allegations and issues related to sexual abuse by clerics with minors, the Diocese of Shreveport has maintained and updated policies and procedures consistent with the law of the universal Church. (Indeed, many of these policies and procedures are extended to all individuals who perform the work of the Diocese and to all issues of abuse and neglect of minors.)

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, with revisions adopted on November 13, 2002 (hereinafter USCCB Charter). The charter addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel (i.e., employees and volunteers). The bishops of the United States have promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position, whether the sexual abuse was recent or occurred many years ago. They stated that they would be as open as possible with the people in parishes and communities about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. They have committed themselves to the pastoral and spiritual care and emotional well-being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families.

In addition, the bishops will work with parents, civil authorities, educators, and various organizations in the community to make and maintain the safest environment for minors. In the same way, the bishops have pledged to evaluate the background of seminary applicants as well as all church personnel, who have responsibility for the care and supervision of children and young people.

Therefore, to ensure that each diocese/eparchy in the United States of America will have procedures in place to respond promptly to all allegations of sexual abuse of minors, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on June 14, 2002 also decreed Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, revised November 13, 2002 (hereinafter USCCB Essential Norms). Following the changes proposed by the Mixed Commission of four bishops from the Holy See and four bishops from the United States, meeting in Rome in October 2002, these revisions were approved by the USCCB, with Bishop William B. Friend, Bishop of the Diocese of Shreveport, serving on its executive committee. Having received the recognitio of the Apostolic See on December 8, 2002, and having been legitimately promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on December 12, 2002, these norms constitute particular law for all the dioceses/eparchies of the United States effective March 1, 2003, with respect to all priests and deacons in the ecclesiastical ministry of the Church in the United States. These norms are complementary to the universal law of the Church, which has traditionally considered the abuse of minors a grave delict and punishes the offender with penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants.

Many of the provisions of the USCCB's Charter and the Essential Norms have been contained in the Diocese of Shreveport's policies and procedures since 1991. To the extent that they were now inconsistent, ever committed to dealing appropriately and effectively with cases regarding sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel (i.e., employees and volunteers), Bishop Friend directed that the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Shreveport be amended so as to incorporate the provisions of the USCCB Charter and Essential Norms.

These policies recognize that sexual abuse of minors is a special problem with a profound impact on the lives of those affected. In the case of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, a church employee or a commissioned lay volunteer³ the integrity of the ministry and the Church itself as the servant of the people of God is damaged as well. Clerics and church personnel serve by ministering to the spiritual needs of the people. When servant becomes abuser, the relationship of trust necessary for ministry is diminished for all.

Sexual abuse by a cleric or church worker with a minor affects the whole Church. The solution to this problem must involve the whole Church. The following policies and procedures are the next step in the Diocese's continuing effort to provide for the safety of the people among whom it carries on its pastoral mission while protecting the reputation of clerics who may be subject to inaccurate or false allegations.

A revised text of the Essential Norms was approved by members of the USCCB on June 17, 2005. The recognitio from the Conference for Bishops was issued on January 1, 2006. The procedures of the Diocese of Shreveport have been brought into agreement with the 2005 Revised Essential Norms by means of this second revision dated September 28, 2006.

§1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1 contains general statements of policy from which specific procedural recommendations follow. Section 1 recognizes the Diocese's responsibility to establish appropriate educational programs for seminarians, deacons, priests and lay church workers about the nature and effect of sexual abuse of minors.

§1.1. Establishment of the Policy

1.1. Policy Sexual abuse⁴ by a cleric⁵ or lay church worker with a minor⁶ violates human dignity, ministerial commitment and the mission of the Church; therefore the Diocese establishes these policies and procedures to review the fitness for ministry of anyone accused of sexual abuse of a minor. The policies and procedures shall involve the people of the Church in a substantive role.

- (1) The primary purposes of these policies and procedures are the safety of children, the well being of the community, and the integrity of the Church. The policies and procedures shall be fair and responsive to the pastoral needs of the victim, the victim's family, the community, and the accused. The policies and procedures shall facilitate cooperation and avoid interference with civil authorities responsible for investigating allegations of sexual abuse.
- (2) The Diocese shall continue to make its policies and procedures related to sexual abuse available in published form and as the subject of periodic public announcements so that those affected can readily seek and receive the assistance which the policies provide. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 2) The Code of Pastoral Conduct sets forth specific expectations for reasonable conduct.

§1.2. Funding, Staff and Facilities

1.2. Policy The Diocese shall provide sufficient funding, staff and facilities to assure the effective implementation of the programs established by these provisions.

§1.3. Education of Seminarians, Clerics and other Church Personnel

1.3. Policy The Office of Ongoing Formation for Priests, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, the Office of Catholic Schools, the Offices for Catechetics and Worship, the Office of Campus, Youth and Young Adult Ministries and other appropriate pastoral agencies shall establish appropriate programs about the nature and effect of sexual abuse of a minor for the education of seminarians and deacon candidates and for the continuing education of clerics and other church personnel.

§1.4. Review and Amendment of Policies and Procedures

1.4. Policy The Permanent Review Board established in Section 4 shall periodically review these policies and procedures and make any recommendations for amendment to the Bishop. The Bishop may amend these policies and procedures at any time upon the recommendation of the Permanent Review Board or at his own initiative. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §4.B)

§2 ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

Section 2 recognizes the Church's pastoral responsibility to assist all those affected by child sexual abuse by clerics and church lay workers: the victim and the victim's family, the community, the accused. Section 2 establishes a Victim Assistance Minister whose duties will include the identification of pastoral and professional resources which will be made available to assist the victims of abuse. In addition, the Church's outreach to communities affected will be organized to promote understanding and healing.

Finally, the roles of Vicar for Clergy as pastor to the priests of the Diocese and as pastor to the Diaconate Community are addressed. The diocesan Director of Human Resources will assist lay persons who are accused.

§2.1. Assistance to Victims

2.1. Policy The Diocese shall make appropriate assistance available to those who may be affected by the alleged sexual abuse of a cleric or church worker with a minor, whether the abuse was recent or occurred many years in the past. This outreach will include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the Diocese. In cooperation with social service agencies and other churches, support groups for victims/survivors and others affected by abuse are to be fostered and encouraged by the Diocese and in local parish communities. (USCCB Charter, Art. 1)

§2.2. Victim Assistance Minister

2.2. Policy The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victims is for healing and reconciliation. The Diocese shall designate a Victim Assistance Minister [*competent assistance coordinator*] who shall minister to the alleged victim, victim's family or other persons affected, doing so with a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The minister shall identify professional and other resources and make them available to aid in the pastoral care of a victim or other person. In the case of any disclosure of sexual abuse of a minor, the Victim Assistance Minister shall report the fact to the Assessor. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Articles 1 & 2, and USCCB Essential Norms, §3) The Diocese will not enter into confidentiality agreements except for grave and substantial reasons brought forward by the victim/survivor and noted in the text of the agreement. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 3) Through pastoral outreach to victims and their families, the Bishop or his representative will offer to meet with them, to listen with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns, and to share the "profound sense of solidarity and concern" expressed by our Holy Father in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers. This pastoral outreach by the Bishop or his delegate will also be directed to faith communities in which the sexual abuse occurred. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 1)

§2.3. Safe Environment Programs

2.3. Policy The Diocese shall develop and maintain “safe environment” programs and programs for outreach to communities affected. The programs shall promote healing and understanding. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. The Diocese will make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 12)

Procedures

- a) The Diocese requires mandatory participation in in-service programs for clergy, employees and commissioned volunteers on topics related to sexual abuse and healthy human relationships. This includes required participation in the VIRTUS Program, entitled “Protecting God's Children.”
- b) Appropriate methods of evaluation shall be conducted for all clergy, church personnel, employed and volunteer, who have regular contact with minors. (Diocese of Shreveport Personnel Policy Manual)
- c) The Code of Pastoral Conduct will be furnished to those serving in ministry in the Diocese of Shreveport and will be available to members of the community upon request.

§2.4. Assistance to Clergy Accused

2.4. Policy In the case of any disclosure of sexual abuse by a cleric with a minor, the Vicar for Clergy shall report the fact to the Assessor. This Vicar is the representative of the Bishop who ministers to the clergy of the Diocese by providing assistance, advice, support, and by facilitating referrals to resource persons and other professionals. An offending priest or deacon will be offered professional assistance for his own healing and well-being, as well as for the purpose of prevention. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 5)

§2.5. Assistance to Lay Church Workers of the Diocese of Shreveport Who Are Accused

2.5. Policy In the case of any disclosure of sexual abuse by a lay church worker with a minor, the Diocesan Director of Human Resources shall report the fact to the Assessor. This Director is the representative of the Bishop who ministers to church workers of the Diocese by providing assistance, advice, support, and by facilitating referrals to resource persons and other professionals. An offending worker will be offered professional assistance for his own healing and well-being, as well as for the purpose of prevention. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 5)

§3 Screening Formation, Education & Assignment To Ministry

Section 3 contains provisions confirming the Diocese's responsibility to screen candidates for the priesthood, diaconate and for lay church workers and to enhance educational programs regarding sexuality and sexual abuse. The Diocese's cooperative relationship with religious communities and clerics of other dioceses is clarified and the authority to review the fitness of clerics seeking assignment is confirmed.

§3.1. Background Checks of Seminarians, Clerics and Lay Church Workers

3.1. Policy The Diocese shall evaluate the background of all Diocesan personnel who have regular contact with minors. Specifically, the Diocese will utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. In addition, the Diocese shall employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Program of Priestly Formation, 1993, no. 513). The Diocese shall review and augment on-going programs for the screening and education of seminarians and deacon candidates and the continuing education of clerics and church workers in matters related to sexuality and sexual abuse. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 13)

Procedures

- a) **Psychological Profile.** Consistent with applicable ethical, canonical and legal principles and as soon as may be appropriate, a full psychological profile of each seminarian and deacon candidate shall be obtained. In addition to general psychological fitness for ordination and ministry, the profile should seek to identify tendencies of pedophilia or ephebophilia. The psychological profile shall be maintained as part of the seminarian's or candidate's permanent personnel file. The profile may be updated as necessary or appropriate.

- b) **Developmental Programs.** The Diocese shall offer, as part of their formation programs, appropriate courses and components that deal in depth with psychological development, including both moral and deviant sexual behavior, with emphasis on the implications of making moral choices in accord with Church teaching and priestly commitment. While the priestly commitment to the virtue of chastity and the gift of celibacy is well known, there will be clear and well-publicized Diocesan standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people. (USCCB Charter, Art. 6)

- c) **Certification.** Every cleric who holds or requests faculties within the Diocese shall certify in writing that he has read and is familiar with the Diocesan policies and procedures regarding sexual abuse of minors. The cleric's certification will be maintained in the cleric's personnel file.

- d) Programs of formation of seminarians will focus on the question of human formation for celibate chastity based on the criteria found in Pastores Dabo Vobis (1992). The Diocese will develop systematic ongoing formation programs in keeping with the recent Conference document Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests (2001) so as to assist priests in their living out of their vocation. (USCCB Charter, Art. 17)

§3.2. Assignment and Transfer of Clergy and Lay Workers Outside their Jurisdiction

§3.2.1. Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Shreveport

3.2.1. Policy No Diocesan priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for ministerial assignment in another diocese/eparchy or religious province. Every bishop/eparch who receives a priest or deacon from outside his jurisdiction will obtain the necessary information regarding any past act of sexual abuse of a minor by the priest or deacon in question. Before a diocesan priest or deacon can be transferred for residence to another diocese/eparchy or religious province, the Bishop or his delegate shall forward, in a confidential manner, to the local bishop/eparch and religious ordinary (if applicable) of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people. In proposing a priest or deacon for residence outside the Diocese, the Bishop or his delegate shall provide the receiving bishop/eparch or religious ordinary with the necessary information regarding any past act of sexual abuse of a minor by the priest or deacon in question. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 14, and USCCB Essential Norms, §12)

§3.2.2. Religious Communities and Clergy of Other Dioceses

3.2.2. Policy In the case of the assignment for residence of such a clerical member of an institute or a society into a local community within a diocese/eparchy, the major superior shall inform the diocesan/eparchial bishop and share with him in a manner respecting the limitations of confidentiality found in canon and civil law all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people so that the bishop/eparch can make an informed judgment that suitable safeguards are in place for the protection of children or young people. This will be done with due recognition of the legitimate authority of the bishop/eparch; of the provisions of CIC, canon 678, (CCEO, canons 415 §1 and 554 §2), and of CIC, canon 679; and of the autonomy of the religious life (CIC, c. 586).

§3.2.3. Transfer of an Accused Lay Worker

3.2.3. Policy No lay church worker who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred or recommended for ministerial assignment in another diocese, child care center or education institution.

§3.3. Religious Personnel

3.3. Policy Religious communities whose members maintain or seek faculties to minister in the Diocese shall abide by the Diocesan policies and procedures relating to sexual abuse of minors.

Procedures

- a) The religious community must provide a copy of its own policies and procedures to the Bishop's delegate.
- b) The presenting community shall provide a written statement about the status, background, character and reputation of each religious presented for faculties in the Diocese, as provided in the model promulgated by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. In the case of any incident of sexual abuse of a minor, the presenting community shall submit to the Bishop's delegate a comprehensive report of the allegation and its disposition. (See §3.5.1)
- c) If a religious exercising public ministry or an apostolate in the Diocese of Shreveport is accused of sexual abuse of a minor, the Bishop's delegate and the competent religious superior shall confer with each other. Concerning withdrawal from ministerial functions, the Diocese will determine whether or not the religious may continue to exercise a ministry which involves the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, or some other work of the apostolate (cf. cc. 392 and 678, §1). If the Diocese determines that a religious may no longer exercise such ministry in the Diocese, his or her faculties will be revoked, and his/her proper Ordinary will be requested to recall the religious immediately. The religious community retains its rightful autonomy and responsibility to address issues pertaining to its internal affairs, such as psychological assessment, treatment and aftercare for the accused.
- d) If sexual abuse of a minor is alleged to have occurred involving a religious ministering in a parish, school or other entity under the auspices of the Diocese of Shreveport, the Diocese retains the right to initiate the process of investigation and follow-up with the Assessor and the Permanent Review Board and take whatever action it deems appropriate. Since religious are also subject to their own proper superiors and to the discipline of their institute (c. 678, §2), the religious community may also choose to review the allegation in keeping with its own policies and procedures. If the religious superior removes the religious from the office entrusted to him/her after having informed the Bishop (c. 682, §2), the religious' Diocesan faculties will be revoked. However, any

determination about return to ministry in the Diocese and restoration of Diocesan faculties will be made according to Diocesan policies and procedures in this regard.

- e) If a religious exercising a ministry strictly internal to the religious community without Diocesan faculties is accused of sexual abuse of a minor, the religious community may choose to review the allegation in keeping with its own policies and procedures. Any subsequent presentation for Diocesan faculties is subject to Diocesan policies and procedures. In any case, the Diocese retains the right for a most grave cause to prohibit a member of a religious institute from residing in the Diocese or at any particular location in the Diocese. If the religious' major superior has not made provision after having been informed; such matters are to be referred to the Holy See (c. 679).

§3.4. Ministry of Extern Priests

3.4. Policy The Diocese shall maintain and periodically review its policies affecting extern priests who seek or maintain faculties in the Diocese. The priest's proper Ordinary shall certify whether he is aware of anything in the priest's background which would render him unsuitable to work with minors. In the case of any allegation or incident of sexual abuse of a minor, the priest's proper Ordinary shall submit to the Bishop's delegate a comprehensive report of the allegation and its disposition.

Procedures

- a) If an extern priest exercising public ministry or an apostolate in the Diocese of Shreveport is accused of sexual abuse of a minor, the Diocese must confer with the competent Ordinary. The Diocese of Shreveport will determine whether or not the priest may continue to exercise a ministry which involves the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, or some other work of the apostolate (cf. cc. 392 and 678, §1). If the Diocese determines that an extern priest may no longer exercise any ministry in the Diocese, his faculties will be revoked, and his proper Ordinary will be requested to recall the priest immediately.
- b) If sexual abuse of a minor is alleged to have occurred, the Diocese of Shreveport retains the right to initiate the process of investigation and follow-up with the Assessor and the Permanent Review Board and take whatever action it deems appropriate. Any determination about return to ministry and restoration of faculties will be made according to Diocesan policies and procedures.

§3.5. Deacons

§3.5.1 Deacons and Vicar for Clergy

3.5.1. Policy The Assessor shall work together with the Vicar for Clergy when a deacon is involved in any incident or allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

§3.5.2. Diocesan Deacons Accused

3.5.2. Policy The Diocese shall maintain and periodically review its policies affecting Deacons who seek or maintain faculties in the Diocese. In the case of any allegation or incident of sexual abuse of a minor, the Bishop's delegate shall refer the matter to the Assessor, who shall follow the policies and procedures established in this Diocesan Policy in so far as they apply to deacons and the case under review.

§3.5.3. Extern Deacons Accused

3.5.3. Policy When a deacon relocates into the Diocese and requests faculties to minister, the proper Ordinary shall certify whether he is aware of anything in the deacon's background which would render him unsuitable for ministry. In the case of any allegation or incident of sexual abuse of a minor, the proper Ordinary shall be notified, and the policies and procedures in this Diocesan Policy shall be followed in so far as they apply to deacons and the case under review.

§3.6. Assignment Review of Priests

3.6. Policy The Bishop and Vicar General shall review assignments of priests accused of sexual abuse of minors in light of these policies. They shall consult with the Assessor when appropriate. The Bishop and Vicar General shall not consider for assignment any priest who is the subject of a proceeding before the Permanent Review Board or in the civil arena.

§4 REVIEW PROCESS FOR CONTINUATION OF MINISTRY

Section 4 establishes the process by which the fitness for ministry of a cleric or church worker accused of sexual abuse of a minor can promptly and credibly be determined and appropriate recommendations made to the Bishop. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor will initially be considered by an Assessor who will make a recommendation to the Bishop. The Permanent Review Board will review the initial recommendation of the Assessor as well as all subsequent issues regarding the fitness for ministry of the accused. The Assessor and Permanent Review Board are established as advisors of the Bishop. The process is declared to be consultative and advisory, not adversarial and adjudicative, and is directed toward pastoral reconciliation and healing. In this context the safety and well-being of the community is of primary concern. Another concern is protecting the reputation of clerics or church workers who may be subject to inaccurate or false accusations. The responsibility of the Assessor to cooperate with civil officials is confirmed as is the Church's pastoral responsibility to take action with respect to religious, pastoral and administrative matters that are beyond the authority of government.

§4.1. Continuation of Ministry Process

4.1. Policy Determinations and recommendations regarding the continuation of ministry of any cleric or church worker who is the subject of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor shall be made to the Bishop according to the consultative and advisory process established in Section 4.

§4.2. Reporting Requirements, Compliance and Cooperation

4.2. Policy All persons associated with the Diocese are expected to comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and will cooperate in their investigation. In every instance, the Diocese will advise and support a person's right to make a report to public authorities. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §11 and §§4.4.3(2) and 4.7.1 of these Diocesan policies) In addition, all Diocesan clergy and all religious, employees, and volunteers working for the Diocese shall comply fully with the letter and spirit of this process. These personnel are expected to promptly report allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor to the Assessor unless prohibited by applicable Church law. Other clerics, religious and church personnel working in the Diocese are expected to cooperate with the process consistent with their particular status within the Diocese. All people of goodwill who may have to relate to the process are asked to do so with understanding and sensitivity for its goals. The Diocese will take all appropriate steps to protect the good name and reputation of all persons involved in this process. (Cf. Canon 220 and USCCB Essential Norms, §6).

Procedures

- a) The necessary observance of the canonical norms internal to the Church is not intended in any way to hinder the course of any civil action that may be operative. At the same time, the Church reaffirms her right to enact

legislation binding on all her members concerning the ecclesiastical dimensions of the delict of sexual abuse of minors. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, endnote 7)

b) Reporting to Public Officials.⁷ In accordance with the “Child Abuse Reporting Procedures of the Diocese of Shreveport” each person serving the Diocese of Shreveport must report to the local law enforcement agency and the immediate supervisor any sexual misconduct of a cleric or church worker with a minor. The report shall contain the following information if known:

- 1) The name, address, age, sex, and race of the child.
- 2) The nature, extent, and cause of the child’s injuries or endangered condition, including any previous known or suspected abuse to this child or the child’s siblings.
- 3) The name and address of the child’s parent(s) or other caretaker.
- 4) The names and ages of all other members of the child’s household.
- 5) The name and address of the reporter.
- 6) An account of how this child came to the reporter’s attention.
- 7) Any explanation of the cause of the child’s injury or condition offered by the child, the caretaker, or any other person.
- 8) Any other information which the reporter believes might be important or relevant.

c) Reporting to the Diocese. Allegations that a cleric or church worker of the Diocese of Shreveport engaged in sexual abuse of a minor must be reported to the Diocese either in writing or by meeting in person with the Assessor or Chancellor, who notifies the bishop.

- 1) To the extent possible, the person making the report should meet in person with the Assessor and provide the Assessor with the name of the accused who is the subject of the allegation, the name or names of the alleged victim or victims, an accurate description of the alleged abuse, the relevant dates, times and circumstances in which the abuse allegedly occurred, and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of other persons who may have knowledge of the alleged abuse.
- 2) If the Assessor learns of an allegation through the media or in some other fashion, the Assessor shall make appropriate inquiries and proceed substantially in the same manner as with any other allegation.

- 3) **Anonymous Allegations.** The Assessor ordinarily will not process anonymous allegations or allegations that do not contain enough information to permit reasonable inquiry. The Assessor shall report all such allegations to the Permanent Review Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting and the Permanent Review Board shall review the Assessor's action.
- 4) **Resigned Clerics or Lay Church Workers.** An allegation against a cleric or church worker who has resigned from active ministry shall be processed in the same manner as any other allegation to the extent necessary to make a determination whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that the accused had engaged in sexual abuse of a minor during the time he or she was serving as a cleric or worker of the Diocese and to facilitate the outreach to those affected as contemplated by these policies. The Initial Review, however, will focus on whether the resigned cleric or church worker is still ministering or employed in an ecclesial setting where minors may be at risk. If the whereabouts of a resigned cleric or church worker against whom an accusation is made are known or can reasonably be determined, the Assessor shall contact the accused and request his response.
- 5) **Retired Clerics.** Since retired clerics and church workers often continue to exercise ministry and perform sacraments, an allegation against someone who has retired from an official assignment shall be processed in the same manner as any other allegation to the extent necessary to make a determination whether minors are currently at risk and whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that the retired person engaged in sexual abuse of a minor.
- 6) **Deceased Clerics and Church Workers.** An allegation against a cleric or church worker who is deceased shall be received by the Assessor, who shall make a written summary of the allegation and refer the alleged victim to the Victim Assistance Minister for appropriate pastoral care. The Victim Assistance Minister will consult with other qualified persons in identifying the nature and extent of pastoral care that would be appropriate under the circumstances. Allegations involving the deceased ordinarily will not be reviewed by the Permanent Review Board since there is no question of current risk to children and since the cleric or church worker is no longer able to respond to the allegation.

§4.3. Permanent Review Board – Role

4.3. Policy The recommendations described in Section 4.1 shall be made to the Bishop by a Permanent Review Board, which will function as a confidential consultative body to the Bishop in discharging his responsibilities (hereinafter “Board”; Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 2, and USCCB Essential Norms, §4):

§4.3.1. Membership of Permanent Review Board

4.3.1. Policy The Permanent Review Board shall be composed of at least five persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church appointed by the Bishop. A majority of the Permanent Review Board members will be lay persons who are not in the employ of the Diocese; but at least one member should be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the Diocese, and at least one member should have particular expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 2, and USCCB Essential Norms, §5)

Procedures

- a) **Full Communion.** “Those baptized are fully in the communion of the Catholic Church on this earth who are joined with Christ in its visible structures by the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesial governance” (Code of Canon Law, c. 205; cf. Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 14).
- b) **Nominating Committee.** The Bishop may appoint a Nominating Committee to propose the names of candidates for the Permanent Review Board. The Nominating Committee should be composed of respected persons with sound judgment. For the nomination of the clerical members of the Permanent Review Board, the Nominating Committee should consult with the Vicar for Clergy and the Executive Committee of the Presbyteral Council. For the other Permanent Review Board positions, the Nominating Committee may at its discretion consult with appropriate professional societies, advocacy groups and other consultative bodies, such as the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- c) **Permanent Review Board Member Orientation.** In order to familiarize Permanent Review Board members with their duties as well as with the pertinent policies and procedures, there should be a Permanent Review Board Member Orientation conducted periodically with input from appropriate Diocesan officials and outside consultants.
- d) **Compensation.** None of the members of the Permanent Review Board shall receive compensation for their services, but all members shall be reimbursed for their necessary expenses.

§4.3.2. Terms of Permanent Review Board Members

4.3.2. Policy Appointments shall be for staggered terms of five years, which can be renewed, and shall continue until a successor is appointed. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §5)

Procedure

Appointments shall be arranged so that the terms of one cleric, one professional, and one member of the Church at large are scheduled to expire at the same time.

§4.3.3. Officers of the Permanent Review Board

4.3.3. Policy The Bishop shall designate one Permanent Review Board member as Chairperson and one Permanent Review Board member as vice chairperson, for one-year terms.

Procedure

The chairperson will ordinarily convene and preside at meetings of the Permanent Review Board in accordance with the will of the Permanent Review Board. The vice-chairperson will perform these functions when the chairperson is unable to do so.

§4.3.4. Permanent Review Board's Relationship with the Bishop

4.3.4. Policy The Permanent Review Board shall serve as the principal advisor of the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry. The Permanent Review Board is not accountable to other officials of the Diocese except as may be necessary for the efficient administration of its business. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 2, and USCCB Essential Norms, §4)

§4.3.5. Quorum and Permanent Review Board Conduct of Business

4.3.5. Policy Four members of the Permanent Review Board shall constitute a quorum and the concurrence of not less than four members of the Permanent Review Board shall be necessary to a determination or recommendation.

§4.3.6. Permanent Review Board Meetings

4.3.6. Policy The Permanent Review Board shall conduct its business at meetings, which shall be scheduled to occur as often as necessary to perform its duties. The meetings shall reflect the pastoral character of this process which is consultative and advisory, not adversarial and adjudicative. The meetings are not hearings. They are sessions at which the Permanent Review Board receives and considers information, deliberates, and formulates its determinations and recommendations. The Permanent Review Board may, in its discretion, limit the information it receives or considers, and the rules of evidence shall not strictly apply.

Procedures

- a) **Meetings.** The Permanent Review Board ordinarily will meet in person but may meet by telephone conference call for the Initial Review. The members of the Permanent Review Board shall not discuss the business of the Permanent Review Board or information presented to the Permanent Review Board outside Permanent Review Board or Committee meetings, except that the Assessor may communicate with Permanent Review Board members as required by this process or as otherwise appears appropriate.
- b) **Attendance.** The Bishop, the Bishop's delegate, other persons designated by the Bishop, and the Assessor may attend those portions of meetings during which information is presented to the Permanent Review Board and the Board makes its recommendations. They may attend other portions of the meetings subject to the discretion of the Permanent Review Board. Other than the person making the accusation or the accused cleric or church worker, all other persons may attend meetings only upon the invitation or with the consent of the Permanent Review Board and subject to such limitations as the Permanent Review Board might require. It is desirable that the Promoter of Justice participate in the meetings of the Permanent Review Board. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §5) Since the Promoter for Justice is responsible to the prosecution of any penal trial before a canonical tribunal, he may attend the Permanent Review Board meetings with voice in the discussions, but with no vote in the Permanent Review Board's determinations and recommendations. After the Permanent Review Board process is completed in the case of a cleric and, if warranted by the outcome, after the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is notified, the Promoter for Justice will proceed as instructed by the bishop in accord with directions from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, unless the Congregation calls the case to itself because of special circumstances. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §8A)
- c) **Committees.** The Chairperson with the consent of the Permanent Review Board may appoint such standing or temporary committees as deemed necessary, and may delegate to such committees any powers necessary to fulfill their purpose, except that the power to make a definitive

recommendation following a Review meeting may not be delegated to any such committee.

§4.3.6.1. Rights of Parties to Meet with the Permanent Review Board

4.3.6.1. Policy The person making an accusation and the accused cleric each have a right to meet with the Permanent Review Board before the Review for Cause is concluded, subject to such reasonable limitations as to time the Permanent Review Board may establish. For good cause they may request to meet with the Permanent Review Board during a Supplemental Review or other meeting and the Permanent Review Board shall exercise reasonable discretion in permitting such appearances and in establishing reasonable time limitations for such appearances.

Procedure

When a person making an accusation or the accused meets with the Permanent Review Board, the Board shall schedule their appearances in such a way that they not meet each other, even inadvertently, unless such contact is expressly approved by the Board.

§4.3.6.2. Individual Rights to Legal/Canonical Counsel

4.3.6.2. Policy Nothing in these policies and procedures shall be interpreted as to abridge an individual's right to legal or canonical counsel.

Procedure

Counsel. For the sake of due process, the accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel and will be promptly notified of the results of the investigation. When necessary, the Diocese will supply canonical counsel to the priest or deacon. (USCCB Charter, Art. 5, and USCCB Essential Norms §§6 and 8.A) Any person appearing before the Permanent Review Board may do so with counsel or, in the Board's discretion which shall be exercised liberally, with such other adviser for whom the person may, in advance of the meeting, request the Board's consent. The Permanent Review Board shall not permit the participation of counsel or other adviser unduly to delay this process. Attorneys licensed to practice civil law, but not canon law, serving as counsel to the person making the allegation or the person accused, may attend such meetings and advise their clients involved in these ecclesiastical processes, with the understanding that such proceedings are conducted according to these policies and procedures and the provisions of canon law; they are not hearings subject to the rules of civil law.

§4.3.7. Duties of the Permanent Review Board

4.3.7. Policy The Permanent Review Board shall have the duty to:

- (1) recommend to the Bishop a candidate or candidates for the position of Assessor;
- (2) supervise the Assessor in cooperation with the bishop;
- (3) advise the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 2, and USCCB Essential Norms, §4.A.)
- (4) offer advice on all aspects of these cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §4.C.)
- (5) make such other recommendations which the Permanent Review Board in its sole discretion determines to be appropriate to reduce the risk to children.
- (6) recommend guidelines for the inquiries of the Assessor, the proceedings of the Permanent Review Board and programs for treatment, rehabilitation and supervision of clerics consistent with these provisions;
- (7) submit, with the assistance of the Assessor, an annual budget proposal to the Bishop at a time to be specified. The budget proposal shall be incorporated into the proposal for the Department of Human Resources and may be considered as part of the Diocesan budget process in consultation with the Permanent Review Board.
- (8) review these policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors; (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §4.B)
- (9) cooperate with the Assessor, the Vicar General, and Director of Human Resources in developing and implementing educational programs for themselves and those participating in this process; and
- (10) seek the advice of such experts and consultants as the Permanent Review Board deems necessary and appropriate.

§4.4. Assessor's Role

4.4. Policy The Assessor serves as investigator in cases covered by this policy. The Assessor is to undergo prior orientation and training in the areas of child abuse, crisis intervention, appropriate criminal and Canon Law, and completely understand and support this policy, and be committed to complete availability on a moment's notice to undertake an investigation. The Assessor is not to be any local ordinary or Diocesan administrative official. The Assessor assists the Permanent Review Board in the performance of its duties.

§4.4.1. Qualifications of the Assessor

4.4.1. Policy The Assessor shall be a lay Catholic professional who maintains appropriate qualifications and substantial experience in investigation and analyzing allegations of sexual abuse of children.

§4.4.2. Appointment of the Assessor

4.4.2. Policy The Bishop shall appoint an Assessor for a term of three years with the advice of the Permanent Review Board. The Bishop may remove the Assessor with the advice of the Permanent Review Board.

§4.4.3. Duties of the Assessor

4.4.3. Policy Under the supervision of the Permanent Review Board the Assessor shall have the duty to:

- (1) receive information and allegations of sexual abuse by a cleric or church worker with a minor;
- (2) report to the public authorities any allegation (unless canonically privileged) of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor, cooperate with public authorities about reporting in cases when the person is no longer a minor, comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the jurisdiction in question. In every instance, the Assessor will advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and will support this right. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 4, and §§4.2 and 4.7.1 of these Diocesan policies). Specifically, the Assessor shall have the duty to report all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor to local law enforcement and to the appropriate prosecuting authority in all cases;
- (3) promptly and objectively interview the accuser and the accused in accord with canonical practice, which includes committing the information to written form and allowing the person interviewed to review and sign what has been committed to writing;
- (4) communicate in an appropriate manner with the victim or person making an allegation, the Victim Assistance Minister, the accused, the Vicar for Clergy, the Bishop, the Permanent Review Board and such other persons as the Bishop or Permanent Review Board may designate;
- (5) assist the Permanent Review Board by preparing and submitting reports pertaining to allegations and requests and such other information as may be appropriate;
- (6) assist the Bishop and his Delegate by preparing and submitting reports summarizing the allegations, the responses of the accused, and the rationale by which the Permanent Review Board arrived at its determinations and recommendations;
- (7) monitor programs which the bishop has established for treatment, rehabilitation or supervision of clerics or church workers who have been withdrawn from ministry and report to the Permanent Review Board about these programs; and
- (8) perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Bishop, his delegate, or Permanent Review Board from time to time.

Procedures

- a) The Assessor shall work cooperatively in the treatment, rehabilitation and monitoring of the offender. The Assessor shall be primarily responsible for the development, implementation, and operation of the program for monitoring. The Assessor and Vicar for Clergy shall work cooperatively in the selection of professionals and institutions to evaluate, diagnose and treat the accused. In the case involving a cleric the Vicar for Clergy is primarily responsible for pastoral and spiritual life concerns and treatment questions that require a sensitivity to confidences; in the case of accused lay persons the Director of Human Resources provides such a service.
- b) Under the Permanent Review Board’s supervision, the Assessor may retain whatever professional assistance necessary and appropriate to conduct a thorough investigation of an allegation. The Assessor shall provide oral and written reports to the Permanent Review Board containing the findings of such investigations to assist the Permanent Review Board in its consideration of the allegations.

§4.5. Diocesan “Hot Line” Telephone Number

4.5. Policy To assist the Assessor in implementing this process, the Diocese shall establish and publicize a separate telephone number to facilitate receipt of information. [see §4.2.c]

§4.6. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

4.6. Policy Information generated in connection with the process set forth in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 shall be maintained in a confidential manner and may only be disclosed in accordance with this section.

Procedures

- a) The Assessor is the custodian of all information described in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and shall develop an appropriate record keeping system to ensure accountability for and security of the information.
- b) The Assessor shall maintain the information in a confidential fashion and may not disclose such information except as follows:
 - 1) the Assessor shall provide the accused with information sufficient to enable him or her to respond to the allegation; either party may have access to his or her own statements pertaining to the allegation or response and may offer them to be incorporated into the record; the Assessor may

provide both the person making the allegation and the accused with such additional information as necessary to process the allegation;

- 2) after the Bishop has made a decision in a matter brought before the Permanent Review Board, the Assessor shall provide the person making the allegation and the accused with appropriate and timely information about the Permanent Review Board's determinations and recommendations and the Bishop's actions;
- 3) the Assessor shall provide access to information to the Permanent Review Board, the Bishop, the Bishop's delegate and other persons the Bishop may designate;
- 4) the Assessor shall provide access to information to the competent superior in connection with allegations about a member of a religious community or another diocese; and
- 5) the Assessor shall disclose such information as may be required by law.
- 6) The Diocese will develop a communications policy that reflects a commitment to transparency and openness. Within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, the Diocese will deal as openly as possible with members of the community. This is especially so with regard to assisting and supporting parish communities directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors. (USCCB Charter, Art. 7)

§4.7. Reporting Allegations to Civil Authorities

4.7. Policy Upon receipt of the allegation, the Assessor promptly shall report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to the public authorities, comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities, will cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the jurisdiction in question, and will cooperate with public authorities about reporting in cases when the person is no longer a minor. The Assessor shall also provide the person making the allegation with a written statement containing information about the right to make a report of such allegations to public authorities and will support this right. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 4, USCCB Essential Norms, §11, and §§4.2 and 4.4.3(2) of these Diocesan policies)

Procedure

The Assessor shall review the accused's files⁸ or background, make appropriate inquiries about the allegation, and prepare a report of all available information for presentation to the Permanent Review Board either orally or in writing at the

Initial Review meeting. The Assessor shall reduce an oral report to writing as soon as practical after the Initial Review meeting and make copies of this report available to the Permanent Review Board, the Bishop, his delegate, and such other persons that the Bishop may designate.

§4.7.1. Assessor's Reporting Responsibilities

4.7.1. Policy Ordinarily, the Assessor shall also promptly do the following:

- (1) report the allegation to the Victim Assistance Minister;
- (2) report the allegation to the Bishop, his delegate and other persons that the Bishop may designate;
- (3) inform the accused and request his/her response;
- (4) assess whether the safety of children requires interim action and promptly communicate a recommendation to the Bishop.

Procedure

- a) Interim action can include temporary withdrawal from ministry, monitoring, restrictions or other actions deemed appropriate by the Bishop for the sake of the common good (see canon 223, §2 of the Code of Canon Law and §§4.10 and 4.12 of these Diocesan policies).
- b) In making such assessments and recommendations, the Assessor may consult with the Bishop, his delegate, and persons designated by the Bishop.

§4.7.2. Preliminary Investigation of Accusations

4.7.2. Policy When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively, unless such an inquiry seems entirely superfluous, e.g., due to compelling evidence or the cleric's admission of the alleged abuse (c. 1717). During the investigation the accused enjoys the presumption of innocence. All appropriate steps shall be taken during the investigation to protect the reputation of the accused and of the person making the allegation. (Cf. USCCB Revised Charter, Art. 5, and USCCB Revised Norms, §6)

Procedures

- a) The Assessor shall prepare one or more written reports of these inquiries for the appropriate canonical process and the Permanent Review Board. These reports should include descriptions of actions taken by the Assessor, such additional inquiry as may be required, and identification of information that was not available to the Assessor and why that information was not available.

- b) Before initiating a judicial or administrative process to impose or declare penalties, the Bishop should seek the cleric's voluntary cooperation to avoid or repair scandal, restore justice and reform the offender through various means of pastoral solicitude. (Cf. c.1341)
- c) The alleged offender may be requested to seek, or urged voluntarily to comply with, an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually acceptable to the Diocese and the accused, so long as this does not interfere with the investigation by civil authorities. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 5, and USCCB Essential Norms, §7)
- d) The Assessor must confer with the Permanent Review Board chair to schedule and give effective notice of any meetings of the Permanent Review Board.

§4.8. The Initial Review of Accusation

4.8. Policy Ordinarily, the Permanent Review Board shall meet to conduct an Initial Review within approximately three to five days after the Administrator has obtained the pertinent information from the accuser and has given the accused reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegation(s). The Permanent Review Board or the Assessor may delay scheduling the Initial Review for a good reason, such as to await the completion of action by public bodies.

§4.8.1. Outcome of Review Reported to the Bishop

4.8.1. Policy At the Initial Review meeting, the Permanent Review Board shall advise the bishop: (1) whether the information received at least seems to be true of an offence (c. 1717 §1); (2) whether the interim actions recommended by the Assessor were appropriate to provide for the safety of children; (3) its recommendations based on its expertise regarding the scope and course of the investigation; and (4) what further interim action should be taken with respect to the allegation.

Procedure

The Permanent Review Board shall consider the Assessor's report, information provided by the Bishop's delegate or other persons identified by the Bishop, and any other information which the Permanent Review Board believes helpful and is able to obtain.

§4.8.2. Permanent Review Board's Specific Recommendations to the Bishop

4.8.2. Policy The Permanent Review Board shall make recommendations to the Bishop about the following:

- (1) if the accused has already been temporarily withdrawn from ministry pending inquiry, whether such withdrawal should continue; if the withdrawal should not continue, whether any restrictions should be imposed on a cleric returning to ministry;
- (2) if the accused has not been temporarily withdrawn from ministry, whether he/she should be withdrawn, whether he/she should continue in his/her assignment and, if so, whether any restrictions should be imposed upon him/her;
- (3) whether the interim actions taken by the Assessor were appropriate and whether further action by the Assessor is required;
- (4) whether the file may be closed at this stage of the proceedings or held open pending action by public bodies, further inquiry by the Assessor, or further action by the Permanent Review Board; and
- (5) if the accused's conduct does not constitute sexual abuse of a minor but is otherwise inappropriate, whether further action is warranted and suggestions as to such action.

§4.8.3. Preliminary Investigation

4.8.3. Policy When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, deacon or church worker is received, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively, unless such an inquiry seems entirely superfluous, e.g., due to compelling evidence or the accused's admission of the alleged abuse (c. 1717). During the investigation the accused enjoys the presumption of innocence. All appropriate steps shall be taken during the investigation to protect the reputation of the accused and of the person making the allegation. (Cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 5, and USCCB Essential Norms, §6)

Procedures

- a) Whenever the bishop determines, based on the advice of the Permanent Review Board at the Initial Review, that the information at least seems to be true of an offense, the bishop shall appoint a lay auditor from the Tribunal (cf. canon 1428) to conduct the preliminary investigation in accord with canon 1717.
- b) The auditor conducting the preliminary investigation shall prepare one or more written reports of these inquiries for the appropriate canonical process and the Permanent Review Board. These reports should include descriptions of actions taken by the Administrator, such additional inquiry as may be required, and identification of information that was not available to the Administrator and why that information was not available.

§4.9. Review for Cause by the Permanent Review Board

4.9. Policy A Review for Cause shall ordinarily be initiated and scheduled to occur no earlier than thirty and no later than one hundred eighty days after completion of the Initial Review. The Permanent Review Board may delay scheduling the Review for Cause for a good reason, such as to await the completion of action by public bodies.

§4.9.1. Permanent Review Board's Determination and Recommendations

4.9.1. Policy At the Review for Cause the Permanent Review Board shall determine: (1) whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that the accused engaged in sexual abuse of a minor; (2) whether prior determinations as to ministry by the accused should be altered; and (3) what further action, if any, should be taken with respect to the allegation.

Procedures

The Permanent Review Board shall consider the Assessor's reports, information provided by the Bishop's delegate or other persons identified by the Bishop, and any other information which the Permanent Review Board believes helpful and is able to obtain.

§4.9.2. Who Initiates the Review for Cause

4.9.2. Policy The Review for Cause may be initiated by the accused who was withdrawn from ministry, the Assessor, the Bishop, the Bishop's delegate or by the Permanent Review Board in any manner it deems appropriate.

§4.9.3. Permanent Review Board's Determinations and Recommendations

4.9.3 Policy The Permanent Review Board shall determine whether it is reasonable to return the accused to ministry or keep the accused in ministry in view of all the facts and circumstances, giving appropriate consideration to the safety of children and the rights of the accused. The Permanent Review Board shall make appropriate recommendations to the Bishop about the following:

- (1) if the accused has already been withdrawn from ministry pending inquiry, whether such withdrawal should continue; if it should not continue, whether any restrictions should be imposed on an accused returning to ministry;
- (2) if the accused has not been withdrawn from ministry, whether he/she should remain and, if so, whether any restrictions should be imposed on him/her;
- (3) whether the file should be closed at this stage of the proceedings;
- (4) whether the file should be held open for some reason;
- (5) if the accused's conduct does not constitute sexual abuse of a minor but is otherwise inappropriate, whether further action appears desirable and suggestions as to possible action; and

(6) such other matters as the Permanent Review Board deems appropriate.

§4.10. Administrative Leave for a Cleric

4.10. Policy When there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric has occurred, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith shall be notified. The Bishop shall then apply the precautionary measures mentioned in canon 1722, i.e., withdraw the accused from exercising the sacred ministry or from any ecclesiastical office or function, impose or prohibit residence in a given place or territory, and prohibit public participation in the most Holy Eucharist pending the outcome of the process. (Cf. USCCB Essential Norms, §6)

§4.11. Permanent Review Board: Supplementary Reviews

4.11. Policy The Permanent Review Board may conduct such Supplementary Reviews as may be necessary to discharge its duties.

§4.11.1. Questions for Review

4.11.1. Policy The Permanent Review Board may consider new information about a determination or recommendation made in connection with a prior review, exercise its responsibility as described in Sections 4 and 5, or oversee the work of the Assessor, the victim assistance program, the supervision and therapy program for affected clerics or any other matter within its responsibility.

Procedure

The Permanent Review Board may consider the application for review, the Assessor's reports, information provided by the Bishop, the Bishop's delegate or other persons identified by the Bishop, and any other information which the Permanent Review Board believes helpful and is able to obtain.

§4.11.2. Who Initiates a Supplementary Review

4.11.2. Policy A Supplementary Review may be initiated by the Permanent Review Board, the Assessor, the Bishop, or the Bishop's delegate. In addition, the accused, a person who made an allegation, a victim or the family of a victim may apply to the Permanent Review Board in writing for such a review and shall include in the application a statement of the question or point for review, the applicant's position with respect to the matter, and any supporting explanation or information.

§4.11.3. Supplementary Review Determinations

4.11.3. Policy The Permanent Review Board may make the same kinds of determinations and recommendations as in a prior Review and make such other determinations and recommendations as it deems appropriate.

§4.12. Monitoring Protocols/Programs for Accused

§4.12. Policy Monitoring protocols and programs for those who have been accused or have engaged in sexual abuse of minors must reflect the primary goals of protecting children and the integrity of the church. Monitoring is implemented when deemed appropriate at an Initial Review, when the accused has been temporarily withdrawn from ministry pending further inquiry or when a cleric has been permanently removed from ministry but allowed to remain a cleric when sexual abuse by the cleric is admitted or is established after an appropriate investigation in accord with canon law.

Procedure

The primary purposes of monitoring those who have engaged in sexual abuse of minors are the safety of children and the integrity of the Church. The programs need to be flexible to recognize individual circumstances and the fact that knowledge and insight continue to develop. They should be evaluated periodically for this reason. These programs should also recognize, in an appropriate way, redemption and forgiveness and seek to provide hope for those dealing with the dysfunction that causes sexual abuse. They must be consistent and fair, and the application in a given case not be arbitrary, but recognize individual circumstances.

§4.12.1. Cleric Monitoring; Removal of Lay Workers

§4.12.1. Policy A cleric who has been found to have engaged in sexual abuse of a minor will be subject to appropriate monitoring for the remainder of his life as a cleric of the Diocese and his file shall remain open. Even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor by a lay worker or volunteer admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending minister will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry.

Procedure

Recovery from the dysfunction which causes sexual abuse of minors is considered, in the light to the experience and research presently available, an ongoing and lifelong process. Further, the Diocese is civilly and morally responsible to exercise due diligence in these matters to ensure that those within its care are not placed at risk. For these reasons, the monitoring in such cases is a lifelong process.

§4.12.2. Case by Case Monitoring Programs/Protocols

§4.12.2. Policy Monitoring programs and protocols should be applied on a case by case basis but must include certain essential components.

Procedures

While the monitoring protocol approved by the Permanent Review Board in a given case might include myriad controls or restrictions that have proven helpful, all cases must include certain essential elements. They are:

- ✓ continuing oversight by the Permanent Review Board with periodic evaluation and reports to the Bishop;
- ✓ a written protocol signed by the cleric which sets forth the particular requirements applicable to him;
- ✓ restrictions from being alone with anyone under the age of 18;
- ✓ periodic physical evaluation and psychological reports as recommended by the Permanent Review Board;
- ✓ regular individual spiritual direction;
- ✓ communication with leaders and others as appropriate in the cleric's residence in order that they are meaningfully apprised and able to assist in the program;
- ✓ a provision requiring clerics who use the Internet to provide the Assessor with a monthly printout of Internet sites visited.

§5 CANONICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Section 5 recognizes that a cleric who has admitted or been found to have engaged in sexual abuse of a minor may never return to ministry. We repeat the words of our Holy Father in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers: “There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young.”

§5.1. Single Act of Abuse of a Child by a Cleric

§5.1. Policy When even a single act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants (c. 1395, §2).⁹ While affording every opportunity to the offender for conversion of heart and forgiveness through sacramental reconciliation, and recognizing the abundant mercy of God’s infinite graces, the Church also acknowledges the need to do penance for one’s sins, that there are consequences for wrongful actions, and that the safety of children requires certain measures to be taken even after there is forgiveness.

A. In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for in canon law must be observed, and the various provisions of canon law must be considered (Cf. Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State, 1995; Graviora Delicta, Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, May 18, 2001). Unless the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, having been notified, calls the case to itself because of special circumstances, it will direct the Bishop how to proceed (Article 13, “Procedural Norms” for *Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, AAS, 93, 2001, p. 787). If the case would otherwise be barred by prescription, because sexual abuse of a minor is a grave offense, the Bishop may apply to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for a derogation from the prescription, while indicating relevant grave concerns. For the sake of canonical due process, the accused is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the Diocese will supply canonical counsel to a priest. The provisions of canon 1722 shall be implemented during the pendency of the penal process.

B. If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g., for reasons of advanced age or infirmity), the offender is to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments. He is to be instructed not to wear clerical garb, or to present himself publicly as a priest. (cf. USCCB Charter, Art. 5, and USCCB Essential Norms §8)

§5.2. Exercise of an Administrative Act for Removal of a Cleric

5.2. Policy At all times, the Bishop has the executive power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, through an administrative act, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry.¹⁰ Because sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (c. 1395, §2) and is a crime in all jurisdictions in the United States, for the sake of the common good and observing the provisions of canon law, the Bishop shall exercise this power of governance to ensure that anyone who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described above shall not continue in active ministry. (USCCB Essential Norms, §9)

Procedures

The Bishop may exercise his executive power of governance to take one or more of the following administrative actions (cc.381 and 129ff):

- a) He may request that the accused freely resign from any currently held ecclesiastical office (cc.187-189);
- b) Should the accused decline to resign and should the Bishop judge the accused to be truly not suitable (c.149, §1) at this time for holding an office previously freely conferred (c.157), then he may remove that person from office observing the required canonical procedures (cc.192-195, 1740-1747);
- c) For a cleric who holds no office in the Diocese, any previously delegated faculties may be administratively removed (cc. 391, §1 and 142, §1), while any *de iure* faculties may be removed or restricted by the competent authority as provided in the law (c. 764);
- d) The Bishop may also determine that circumstances surrounding a particular case constitute the just and reasonable cause for a priest to celebrate the Eucharist with no member of the faithful present (c. 906). The Bishop may forbid the priest to celebrate the Eucharist publicly and to administer the sacraments, for the good of the Church and for his own good.
- e) Depending on the gravity of the case, the Bishop may also dispense (cc.85-88) the cleric from the obligation of wearing clerical attire (c.284) and may urge that he not do so, for the good of the Church and for his own good.
- f) These administrative actions shall be taken in writing and by means of decrees (cc.47-58) so that the cleric affected is afforded the opportunity of recourse against them in accord with canon law (cc.1734ff).

(The above procedures are outlined in USCCB Essential Norms, §9, footnote 6.)

§5.3. Dispensations and Dismissals from the Clerical State

5.3. Policy The priest or deacon may at any time request a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state. In exceptional cases, the Bishop may request of the Holy See the dismissal of the priest or deacon from the clerical state *ex officio*, even without the consent of the priest or deacon. (USCCB Essential Norms, §10)

Procedures

- a) A cleric described in Section 5.1 and who has not been dismissed from the clerical state may either live in a supervised setting designated by the Diocese in accord with Section 4.12 or resign from active ministry as a cleric and petition for laicization. The Diocese ordinarily will offer such resigned clerics an opportunity for continuing therapy as part of an appropriate severance program. If the cleric does not express a desire to live in such a supervised setting or petition for laicization, the Diocese may pursue appropriate courses of action permitted under the Code of Canon Law.
- b) A cleric who is assigned to live in a supervised setting as described above must sign a written agreement with the Diocese. The agreement must include such provisions as to his restrictions, residence, therapy, supervision and other matters as may be recommended by his therapists or the Permanent Review Board, or required by the Bishop. The cleric's compliance with the terms of the agreement and overall performance will be monitored from time to time by the Assessor. The Assessor will present written reports of the monitoring to the Permanent Review Board at least annually. Either the Permanent Review Board, the Bishop or cleric may initiate a Supplementary Review of the situation in accordance with the procedures in Section 4.

§5.4. Protection of Rights and Unfounded Allegations

5.4. Policy Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and the person against whom the charge has been made. When the accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused. (USCCB Essential Norms, §13)

§5.5. Cleric's Failure to Comply

5.5 Policy A cleric's failure to comply with the agreement he has signed or any of the relevant conditions or restrictions imposed shall be the basis for the initiation of a Supplementary Review which may result in such other appropriate recommendations by the Permanent Review Board for action by the bishop.

§6 CLERGY PERSONNEL RECORDS

Section 6 requires the establishment of unified priest personnel record keeping system to enable those responsible for ministerial assignments to consider the full record of a priest. Under the unified system, the record of a priest will commence upon his entry into seminary training and continue to be maintained throughout his life.

§6.1. Maintaining a Unified Clergy Personnel Record

6.1. Policy The Diocese shall establish and maintain a unified clergy personnel record keeping system to enable the Bishop and other responsible persons to consider the full record of a priest in the making of ministerial assignments. The record of each priest shall commence upon entering seminary training and continue to be maintained throughout the career of the priest.

Procedure

Diocesan policies and procedures shall provide for the administration of the unified clergy personnel record keeping system consistent with law and sound personnel records management. For the purposes enunciated in these policies and procedures, the record shall include records of formational assessment, psychological evaluation, the record and disposition of any proceedings of the Permanent Review Board and any other information suggesting a propensity for sexual abuse of minors.

§6.2. Seminary Files on Clerics in Diocesan Files

6.2. Policy The Chancellor shall request from the rectors of seminaries for incorporation into the priest personnel record keeping system such records in their respective possession as may be allowed by law.

§6.3. Confidentiality of Records

6.3. Policy All records maintained pursuant to this Section shall be confidential. Information contained in a clergy's personnel record may be disclosed by the Chancellor to the Bishop and in the following instances:

- (1) upon request of the Vicar General for consideration by the Permanent Review Board in making assignments;
- (2) upon request of the Assessor as contemplated in Sections 4 and 5 of these policies and procedures;
- (3) upon request of a priest or deacon subject to conditions and limitations set forth in applicable policies and procedures; and

(4) all such disclosures shall be made in a manner consistent with applicable law and sound personnel records management.

Procedure

Secure provision for the records shall be provided by the Chancellor and an appropriate file system established.

CONCLUSION

This Policy for the Protection of Minors replaces the Instructions on Implementation of Policy Concerning Abuse or Neglect of Minors by Church Workers issued January 1991. Each person serving within the Diocese of Shreveport shall comply with this policy and with all laws of the State of Louisiana as well as applicable local and federal laws regarding incidents or allegations of abuse of a minor. A copy of this policy and any subsequent revisions or modifications will be placed on file with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

ENDNOTES

¹ (Gn 1:26) “Then God said: ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...’”

² Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 225, 356, 1700 ff, 1934.

³ Clerics are men who are ordained to the order of priest or deacon. Church employees are paid salaries or wages by the Church. Lay volunteers are commissioned either by the bishop or pastor of a parish. They receive no monetary compensation, but work under supervision of the bishop or pastor, or their delegate.

⁴ For purposes of these Norms, sexual abuse shall include any offense by a cleric against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with a minor as understood in CIC, canon 1395 §2, and CCEO, canon 1453 §1 (Sacramentorum sanctitatus tutela, article 4 §1)

⁵ Canon law defines a “cleric” as a deacon, priest or bishop.

⁶ The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law, L.R.S. 14:403, as amended 1997 and 1998, of the State of Louisiana defines “child” as any person under the age of 18. For purposes of canon law and these policies and procedures, “minor” has the same meaning.

⁷ Source: La. R.S. 14:403 and La. Ch. C. Art. 610.

⁸ Note that there are different files kept by various Diocesan offices, e.g., the Office of the Chancellor, the Director of Human Resources, Vicar for Clergy, the Bishop’s Delegate, etc. These files are managed under the coordination of the Chancellor. See Diocese of Shreveport Unified Clergy Personnel Record Keeping Policies and Clergy Personnel Records. Lay Personnel files are maintained at the employer unit site.

⁹ Removal from ministry is required whether or not the cleric is diagnosed by qualified experts as a pedophile or suffering from a related sexual disorder that requires professional treatment. (Cf. USCCB Norms, §8, footnote 4)

¹⁰ Cf. cc.35-58, 149, 157, 187-189, 192-195, 277 §3, 381 §1, 383, 391, 1348 and 1740-1747.

DIOCESE OF SHREVEPORT

Communications Policy Concerning Sexual Abuse of a Child

Preamble

The Diocese of Shreveport has had in place since January 1994 Guidelines for Dealing with the Media in Cases of Sexual Abuse and/or Cases of Sexual Harassment. The purposes of the earlier set of guidelines was to ensure an open and cooperative manner with persons of the media; to respect the rights of victims and all persons involved; and to be forthcoming about matters pertaining to an accusation involving the sexual abuse of a minor.

More recently, the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Article 7, called for each Diocese to “develop a communications policy that reflects a commitment to transparency and openness. Within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, Dioceses will deal as openly as possible with members of the community. This is especially so with regard to assisting and supporting parish communities directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors.”

Today, perception often is the reality when it comes to public opinion. It is essential to promote accurate perception through the media and to rebut misimpressions.

Matters under litigation, unsubstantiated allegations, and information which a victim has asked the Diocese to keep private qualify as possible exceptions to “transparency”, but the prevailing attitude should be that information is shared unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.

The Diocese of Shreveport herein acts to incorporate the spirit and content of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and its accompanying Essential Norms, and expresses as a priority the implementation of our written Diocesan policies as stated in the written Diocesan policies regarding the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, a church employee or a church worker.

§1.1. Establishment of Policy

<p>1.1. Policy The Diocese of Shreveport is committed to practice a communications policy that is one of transparency and openness. Within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, this Diocese will deal as openly as possible with members of the community, including the church parish most affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors.</p>

§1.2. Purposes of Policy

1.2. The primary purposes of these policies and procedures are the safety of children, the well-being of the community, and the integrity of the Church.

§1.3. Amendments to Policies and Publication

1.3. The Diocese shall continue to review at least annually these policies on communications, amend them as needed, and make them available in written form to all persons who have need to know them.

§1.4. Funding, Staff and Service

1.4. Policy The Diocese shall provide sufficient funding, staff, and services to assure the effective implementation of the actions established by these provisions for communications.

§2. Developing and Maintaining a Pro-Active Stance

§2.1. An Informed Spokesperson

2.1. Policy The Diocesan spokesperson shall be fully, immediately, and continually informed of all pertinent information. He or she should be totally familiar with the details and ramifications of Diocesan policies and procedures regarding complaints of the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, church employee or church volunteer. He or she should be able to explain to the media the major outlines of Diocesan policy and the actions that have been taken for its implementation and application.

§2.2. An Open Spokesperson

2.2. Policy The spokesperson is to have a correct attitude towards the news media, and is to bear in mind that their inquiries, however painful for the Church, are a legitimate function of news gathering organizations.

Procedures

- a) Responding to media inquiries in a way that seems to attribute hostility to the Church or other base motivation to reporters or news organizations is inwardly wrong and also counterproductive.
- b) The spokesperson must bear in mind that it is natural for people, including the media, to be disturbed by allegations of sexual abuse by a priest, church employee, or volunteer. The siege mentality must be avoided, therefore.

- c) The spokesperson in dealing with questions about an incident of a crime perpetrated against a minor needs to set forth the precautionary measures that had been put into place, e.g., the Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct, the distribution of written diocesan policies, background checks, the Permanent Review Board, et cetera.
- d) The spokesperson should not accept blame or take responsibility for things for which the Diocese of Shreveport is not in fact responsible, nor let go unchallenged allegations of insensitivity when such allegations are untrue.
- e) In dealing with the news media, the spokesperson must never forget that the primary emphasis which should be conveyed is the Church's pastoral concern for the victim and his or her family. The response is to be more "pastoral" than "institutional," of more concern for the harm done to the victim and family than the consequences for the institution.
- f) The spokesperson is to respect fully the rights of all individuals, including the rights of a person accused of a crime, but he or she should be as forthcoming as practical and share the efforts expended to prevent such occurrences and to minister to all affected persons in a pastoral manner.

§2.3. Spokesperson is Informed by the Assessor

2.3. Policy The Assessor who is involved in processing a particular accusation is to inform fully the spokesperson so that a proper preparation can be realized for engaging with the news media.

§2.4. Audit Reports

2.4. Policy The Diocese of Shreveport will publish the results of its audit report received from the National Review Board.

§2.5. Prevention Program

2.5. Policy The communications program for the Diocese of Shreveport will provide information periodically about on-going preventative measures designed to help provide a safe environment for children and young people.

§2.6. Emphasizing Concern for Victims

2.6. Policy Among the various measures taken to reach out pastorally to victims, is the practice of communicating access and availability through a hot-line telephone number and the name of the victim's assistance coordinator. This information will be published on a scheduled basis.

§2.7. Litigation

2.7 Policy In the case of litigation regarding an incident of the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, church employee or a church volunteer, the Diocese of Shreveport, without denying the victim's rights to seek relief through the courts, retains the right to defend itself and its need to safeguard the ability to carry on the mission of service to all members of the diocese.

§3. The Bishop's Media Role

3.1. Policy The Bishop of Shreveport shall implement and update as needed the written policies of the Diocese as they pertain to incidents of the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, church employee, or church volunteer.

§3.2. Bishop's Availability to Media

3.2. Policy The Bishop in dealing with accusations of the sexual abuse of minors by a cleric, church employee or church volunteer shall be prepared and available for both print interviews and electronic media interviews, while respecting the role of the designated spokesperson.

§3.3. Diocesan Media

3.3 Policy The Diocesan publication, The Catholic Connection, is to serve as a medium to assist the Bishop in communicating both the preventative measures in place, as well as information pertaining to any case of the sexual abuse of a child by a cleric, church employee or church volunteer.

Procedures

- a) Diocesan media will provide an opportunity for the Bishop to share his thoughts directly with the faithful of the Diocese.
- b) Information concerning these matters can also be placed on the web site of the Diocese.
- c) Parish Bulletins, both weekly and monthly, as well as the various newsletters and publications of Catholic institutions and organizations also can assist in their communication of policies, procedures, preventative measures, et cetera.
- d) Sharing of information among diocesan Directors of Communication in the State of Louisiana is encouraged in regard to matters of prevention, policies, procedures, and in actual cases of sexual abuse of a minor by Church personnel and/or volunteers.

§3.4. Media Leadership Relations

3.4. Policy The Diocese of Shreveport will continue to relate with reporters, editors, news directors, editorial boards and other local media leadership persons in order to provide information of interest; the Diocese will also continue to monitor what is published and broadcast about the Catholic Church via local media organizations.

This communications policy of the Diocese of Shreveport in matters pertaining to the prevention of the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, church employee or church volunteer serves as one more additional effort to provide a safe environment for children and youth.

In the event that a minor is harmed by the sexual abuse perpetrated by a cleric, a church employee or a church volunteer, it is the policy and practice of this Diocese to be as open and transparent as practical, safeguarding the innocent who are caught up in the matter.

The previous policy enacted in January 1994 is hereby revoked. The policies given in the above (Nos. 1.1 through 3.4) are hereby approved for implementation, effective July 1, 2003.

Given in the Chancery, Diocese of Shreveport, Caddo Civil Parish, Louisiana, on this the 18th day of June 2003.

Chancellor

Bishop of Shreveport