Tab S-3

How and Where to Report Suspected Adult Sexual Misconduct

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Anyone who learns of sexual misconduct by a colleague is obligated to report that misconduct to appropriate church officials in the event the victim or offender refuses to do so. (An exception is where information about the misconduct is gained through counseling, which would ethically bar that counselor from disclosing the information without the written permission of the person being counseled.) The following provides guidance on how to report misconduct under varying circumstances.

I. Notification to Clergy or Bishop

Subject to the confidentiality restrictions for counselors (see above), any person suspecting adult sexual misconduct promptly should notify a member of the clergy from the affected parish. In the event a priest is involved, another clergy member of that parish should be notified. If the only clergy for the affected parish is the one suspected of misconduct, the Bishop should be contacted.

II. Learning of Misconduct

Those who learn about sexual misconduct by a colleague should take action based, in part, upon how that knowledge was acquired:

A. When a Victim Wishes to File a Complaint

When an alleged victim comes forward to file a complaint, assist the victim in filing a formal complaint with the rector. The rector then is required to forward that complaint to the Bishop or the Bishop's designated representative. The rector or other parish representative should not seek to contact the alleged offender; such contact is to be initiated by the Bishop. If the victim's complaint is about the rector, assist the victim in filing a complaint directly with the Bishop by calling **1-619-291-5947**). State that the matter is urgent and confidential.

B. When a Victim Discloses Misconduct But Does Not Want to File a Complaint

When an alleged victim discloses misconduct, but is reluctant to file a formal complaint, assist the victim in seeking pastoral care. Such pastoral care should include counseling the victim to file a formal complaint. The rector or other parish representative should not seek to contact the alleged offender; such contact is to be initiated by the Bishop. If the alleged misconduct involves the rector, or if the victim has sought assistance at the parish level and is not satisfied with the parish response, assist the victim in contacting the Bishop directly at **1-619-291-5947**. State that the matter is urgent and confidential. Even if a victim is unwilling to initiate a formal complaint process, the rector or parish must contact the Bishop about the alleged misconduct.

C. When a Third Party with Direct Knowledge Reports Misconduct

When a third party, such as a friend or relative of an alleged victim, reports misconduct, contact the victim to discuss the alleged misconduct if it appears appropriate to do so. If it is not clear whether contacting the victim would be appropriate, seek advice from the Bishop: 1-619-291-5947. State that the matter is urgent and confidential.

D. When an Offender Divulges Misconduct

If an apparent offender divulges misconduct in any way except through reconciliation of the penitent, also known as sacramental confession, urge the offender to report the misconduct, and offer to accompany him/her to make the report at the parish or diocesan level.

E. When There are Misgivings that Misconduct May be Occurring

When there are misgivings, but no report or proof of misconduct, think, pray and be sure to seek counsel from colleagues or an advisor (such as a clergy member, vestry member, warden, licensed counselor, or the Bishop) on how best to proceed. Paying attention to “instincts” could save others from being hurt.

III. Notification to Bishop

The clergy member or warden receiving the report of suspected misconduct should promptly notify the Bishop’s office by telephone at **1-619-291-5947**, and state that the matter is urgent and confidential.

IV. Maintaining Confidentiality

In all situations, the identity of the reporting person should be protected, and the identity of those involved in the misconduct should be disclosed only to those professionally involved. Any writings concerning such misconduct should be kept strictly confidential and maintained in a locked file.

V. Compassion for Victims

Victims who report adult misconduct must be treated with compassion and understanding. They need to be assured that their claim is being taken seriously. They should be assured that efforts will be made to prevent the abuse from happening to others.