



DIOCESE OF FAIRBANKS

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

16 March 2020

Nationwide Service to Report Sexual Misconduct Involving U.S. Bishops

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In May 2019, Pope Francis released his apostolic letter, *Vos estis lux mundi* (“You are the light of the world”) to address the issue of sexual abuse by bishops and major superiors and their accountability in the global Catholic Church. One month after Pope Francis issued his order, the bishops of the United States convened for their general assembly in Baltimore and approved the implementation plan for carrying out the directives of the Holy Father here in the United States.

As part of this ongoing commitment to carrying out *Vos estis lux mundi*, the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) was established. The service is operated by Convercent, Inc. an independent, third-party entity that provides intake services to private institutions for reports of sensitive topics such as sexual harassment through a secure, confidential, and professional platform. For more information on the reporting service and how it works, please visit:

ReportBishopAbuse.org.

This Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service allows for individuals to relay to Church authorities any reports of a U.S. Catholic bishop who has:

- Engaged in Sexual Misconduct against Canon Law and/or Civil Law
- Engaged in Sexual Misconduct against a minor or vulnerable adult
- Or who has intentionally interfered with a civil or church investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by another cleric, religious or someone representing the church

To make a report, individuals may go to ReportBishopAbuse.org. Reports are also accepted by calling (800) 276-1562.

In addition to reporting any allegations against a U.S. Catholic Bishop through the CBAR service, those making a report through this system are also encouraged to report the allegation directly to law enforcement. Reports received by the CBAR which meet criminal law standards will be reported to the local enforcement by the Archdiocese.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) does not replace existing reporting systems for complaints against priests, deacons, religious or laity, but is an expansion of processes already in place. If anyone has been sexually abused by someone representing the Church and has not yet reported the abuse, please consider disclosing what happened to you. The best way to do so is to report to your local law enforcement agency. You may also contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator by calling 907-750-1132 and we will do our best to help you and assist with reporting to law enforcement.

While the mandate by Pope Francis in *Vos estis lux mundi* echoes many of the practices that the Catholic Church in the United States has already implemented since 2002 with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, this new order applies to the bishops and to the worldwide Catholic Church, making clear the pope’s concern of the issue of sexual abuse in the Church at a global level. For additional information, please see the attached documents.

As we continue to work towards a safer environment for all the people of God, may we continue to pray for healing for victims abuse by Church personnel and for all who suffer at the hands of others.

Sincerely in Christ,

†Most Reverend Chad W. Zielinski
Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska
Diocese of Fairbanks

