



## **DIOCESE OF CROOKSTON SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY: *Sexual Abuse of Minors***

**ISSUED:** January 1, 2021; Updated February 17, 2022

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this component of the Diocese of Crookston Safe Environment Policy is to promote safe environments and provide guidance for addressing allegations of sexual abuse. It is written in accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, and the corresponding *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*. This Policy applies to all clergy, Church personnel and adult volunteers in leadership positions within a parish, Catholic school or the Diocese of Crookston.

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

**“Adult Volunteer”** means an adult volunteer for the Diocese of Crookston or a parish or school who has regular or unsupervised contact with unrelated minors.

**“Bishop”** means the sitting Bishop of Diocese of Crookston (or elected Diocesan Administrator).

**“Bishop’s Delegate (Delegate)”** means the employee responsible for managing diocesan processes for handling allegations of clergy misconduct and overseeing the work of the Ministerial Review Board and the Office of Safe Environment.

**“Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service”** means the process established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that receive reports of sexual abuse and related misconduct by bishops, and relays those reports to proper Church authorities for investigation.

**“Chancellor”** means the appointed Chancellor (chief archivist) of the Diocese of Crookston.

**“Clergy”** means any persons ordained — bishops, priests, and deacons — who administer the rites of the Catholic Church.

**“Cleric”** means a member of the Clergy.

**“Church Institution”** means a non-parish institution that is recognized as Catholic in mission or identity by the Diocese of Crookston.

**“Church Personnel”** means, (but not limited to) consecrated religious (other than priests and deacons), seminarians, candidates for the diaconate, business administrators, teachers, and employees, as well as volunteers in positions of leadership within a parish, Catholic school or the Diocese of Crookston. Parish trustees, parish council members, parish finance council members, Catholic school advisory council members, and Diocesan finance council members are examples of volunteers in leadership positions.

**“Code of Conduct”** means the Diocese of Crookston’s *Code of Conduct for Church Leaders* to include Appendices A and B, as well as the Code of Conduct for Youth Employees.

A **“Credible Allegation”** of sexual abuse of a minor means one that is not manifestly false or frivolous and bears a semblance of truth.

**“Diocese”** means the certain corporate entity formed, maintained and existing under Minnesota Section 315.16 with the Minnesota Business Name: “Diocese of Crookston”.

**“Diocese of Crookston Territory”** means the (14) counties of Becker, Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau; and those persons outside the geographical territory over whom the Diocese of Crookston has the ability to direct or control.

**“Essential 3”** means 1) acknowledgment of the Diocese of Crookston’s *Code of Conduct for Church Leaders* and appendices or *Code of Conduct for Youth Employees*; 2) Child Protection online Training Module; and 3) a criminal background check or two references in the case of a youth employee.

**“Independent Investigator”** means an independently contracted person or team hired to investigate allegations of sexual abuse or other misconduct.

**“Mandated Reporter”** means any employee or adult volunteer serving in the Diocese of Crookston, a parish or a school, even if not a mandatory reporter under State Statutes, who has reason to suspect sexual abuse of a minor that would be subject to mandatory reporting under State Statutes, must report that suspicion to law enforcement and child protective services.

**“Ministerial Review Board” or “MRB”** means the confidential, consultative advisory body assembled to advise the Bishop regarding clergy misconduct. The MRB may also review and offer recommendations regarding Diocesan policies and processes relating to misconduct.

**“Minor”** means anyone who has not reached the age of 18. For the purpose of this policy, “minor” includes a “Vulnerable Adult” as applicable.

**“Parish”** means a parish within the Diocese of Crookston Territory that is Diocesan-recognized as Roman Catholic.

**“Pastor”** means a parish pastor, associate pastor, or a parochial administrator, as the case may be.

**“Policies”** means the Diocese of Crookston policies relating to the sexual abuse of minors, including the *Code of Conduct for Church Leaders* and appendices, as well as the *Code of Conduct for Youth Employees*.

**“Safe Environment Program”** means all policies, procedures, and programming that contributes to the protection of minors.

**“School”** means a primary school or a secondary school within the Diocese of Crookston Territory that is Diocesan-recognized as Catholic.

**“Sexual Abuse of a Minor”** means: a physical act of a sexual nature with a minor including sexual touching or penetration; It includes all acts of sexual abuse as defined in Minnesota State Statutes. (See MN State Statute §§ 609.341, subds. 11 and 12 and 626.556, subd. 1n, which includes degrees of criminal sexual contact.); the acquisition, possession, or distribution of child pornography.

**“Substantiated Claim”** of sexual abuse of a minor means one that is supported by sufficient evidence establishing reasonable grounds to believe that the abuse occurred.

**“Victim Assistance Coordinator” or “VAC”** is an independent contractor employed by the Diocese of Crookston who is entrusted with the task of providing support, outreach, and referrals for professional assistance to persons who report having been sexually abused as children by clergy, or by diocesan or parish personnel or volunteers. The VAC may participate, at the discretion of the Bishop, Delegate or MRB Chair, in meetings of the MRB for matters under its consideration.

**“Vulnerable Adult”** means any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence<sup>1</sup>.

### III. POLICY

#### A. Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Minors

1. All clergy, Church personnel and volunteers who interact regularly or unsupervised with minors must be in compliance with Diocese of Crookston policies and protocols.
2. The Diocese of Crookston shall continue to provide information in writing to parishes and schools regarding the prevention of abuse, training to identify signs of abuse, statements that the abused are not at fault and encouraging the reporting of abuse.
3. All those required to comply with the Essential 3 shall complete Diocese of Crookston Safe Environment Training prior to the start of service and the Diocese of Crookston shall continue to provide Safe Environment Training annually to all clergy, employees, and adult volunteers.
4. All mandated reporters must receive training regarding reporting obligations prior to beginning their employment or volunteer position with the Diocese of Crookston, and annually thereafter.

#### B. Procedure for Responding to an Allegation of Sexual Abuse of a Minor by Clergy, Church personnel or Volunteers

1. All allegations of sexual abuse of a minor shall be reported to law enforcement in accordance with state statutes.
2. Any employee or adult volunteer serving in the Diocese of Crookston, a diocesan-recognized parish or school, even if not a mandatory reporter under State Statutes, who has reason to

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, Art. 1, §2b

suspect sexual abuse of a minor that would be subject to mandatory reporting under State Statutes must report that suspicion to law enforcement and child protective services.

3. Clergy, Church personnel and volunteers who report sexual abuse of a minor to civil authorities shall be required to report the same information without undue delay to the [Delegate](#). The [Delegate](#) shall then promptly notify the Bishop. Provided, however, information received during sacramental confession is exempt from this notification requirement.

4. A report to the VAC of the Diocese of Crookston does not relieve the individual from reporting suspected abuse as required under Minnesota law.

5. When a report is made to the VAC, the VAC will inform both the Delegate and the MRB Chair.

6. The Delegate shall notify or confirm that law enforcement has been notified as required by law and Diocese of Crookston policies. The Delegate shall document the notification in writing and file with the complaint.

7. If authorized by law enforcement, and the suspected abuse occurred at or during a parish/school activity or involves parish/school personnel or volunteers, the Delegate shall notify the pastor of the parish, unless the suspected abuse involves the pastor, in which case the Delegate shall notify the bishop and parish trustees. The pastor, in the case of parish/school personnel or volunteers, should complete written documentation of the report and the actions taken.

8. If the alleged abuse involves an accusation against a cleric, the accused cleric shall be notified of the allegation and removed from ministry during the course of the investigation.

9. If the alleged abuse involves an accusation against a member of a religious institute, that institute should be notified promptly to the extent possible and permissible.

9. If there is an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor involving the Bishop, in addition to the applicable notifications set forth above, the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service will be utilized.

10. All allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy will be referred to the Ministerial Review Board; all actions taken will be in accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*.

11. The Diocese of Crookston Office of Communications shall provide assistance to pastors and principals so they may appropriately respond to media inquiries and provide media response designed to reassure the community that abuse allegations are taken seriously and the Diocese of Crookston cooperates fully with civil authorities.

## **C. Investigation**

1. When the Diocese of Crookston receives information that indicates that a clergy member had sexually abused, sexually exploited, or engaged in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, or that requires a mandated report to law enforcement pursuant to Minnesota statute, the Diocese of Crookston shall not conduct an internal investigation, and will not interfere in any way with law enforcement until law enforcement concludes its investigation, closes its file without investigation, or authorizes the Diocese of Crookston to take action. Any such action or investigation undertaken thereafter shall be performed by an outside professional, such as a former law enforcement agent, investigating firm or independent investigator.
2. The Delegate is responsible to ensure that all internal investigations of allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by clergy, Church personnel or volunteers are conducted impartially, thoroughly and fairly by an independent investigator.
3. Investigations shall be conducted so as to gather accurate facts and ascertain the truth. Actions taken during and at the conclusion of the investigation shall be well-reasoned and judicious.<sup>2</sup>
4. Diocesan investigations of allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor by a clerical member of a religious institute ministering in the diocese shall be coordinated with the religious institute.<sup>3</sup> The Delegate is responsible to ensure that this coordination occurs.

#### **D. Resolution**

1. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by non-clergy shall be resolved in accordance with state and federal statutes and other applicable norms.
2. If credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy are not determined to be substantiated:
  - a. The cleric will be returned to ministry in the same or other suitable assignment, if appropriate, as determined by the Bishop.
  - b. Appropriate steps will be taken to restore the good reputation of the cleric.<sup>4</sup>
3. If credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy are determined to be substantiated:
  - a. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith shall be notified.<sup>5</sup> If the cleric has not yet been removed from ministry, the Bishop shall remove the cleric from exercising any ministry.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (2018) (hereto after *Charter*), Art. 5; *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons* (2018) (hereto after *Essential Norms*), No.6.

<sup>3</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 678.

<sup>4</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 220, c. 1390; *Charter*, Art. 5; *Essential Norms*, nos. 6, 13.

<sup>5</sup> See *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*, Art. 6, 16 (hereafter, *SST'*); *Charter*, Art. 5.

<sup>6</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 1722; *Essential Norms*, no. 6.

- b. The final resolution of the canonical process will be deferred until the conclusion of civil and criminal processes, unless more expedited action is necessary.<sup>7</sup>
- c. If an act of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is established through admission or as a result of an investigation in accord with canon law, the cleric will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, and may be dismissed from the clerical state, if the case so warrants.<sup>8</sup> A cleric may at any time request a voluntary dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state (i.e., laicization).<sup>9</sup>
- d. The Diocese of Crookston, parishes, schools, or affiliated entities shall remove photos and any visible honors (such as a plaque honoring that cleric individually or naming of a building or hall in that cleric's honor) from public display for each cleric with substantiated claims of sexual abuse of a minor. This does not prevent the Diocese of Crookston from displaying photos of clerics with substantiated claims of sexual abuse of a minor if that photo or the words accompanying it clearly indicate that the cleric had a substantiated claim of sexual abuse of a minor asserted against him.
- e. If a cleric seeks assignment, transfer, or residence outside the Diocese of Crookston Territory, the Diocese of Crookston shall seek permission from the cleric to make available for review by the receiving diocese, religious community, or organization a complete copy of his clergy file and any other Diocese of Crookston files materially related to the cleric. If the cleric permits review, the Diocese of Crookston shall provide such receiving entity access to the complete clergy file and any other Diocese of Crookston files materially related to the cleric. If the cleric refuses review or limits review of the complete file or any other Diocese of Crookston files materially related to the cleric, the Diocese of Crookston shall notify the receiving entity that the cleric refused access or is limiting access.
- f. No cleric who has a substantiated claim of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese or institution. If a cleric with a substantiated claim of sexual abuse of a minor takes up residence in another diocese, the Diocese of Crookston shall disclose to the other diocese the cleric's status and information concerning the cleric's substantiated claim of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he may be a danger to minors.<sup>10</sup>

**4. Credible Allegations of Sexual abuse of a minor by Clergy that are unresolvable or inconclusive:**

- a. An appropriate response will be made to the allegations, in consultation with the Ministerial Review Board.<sup>11</sup> Possible responses or resolutions include, but are not limited to:

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<sup>7</sup> *Essential Norms*, no. 11.

<sup>8</sup> See *SST*, Art. 6; 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 1395 §2; *Essential Norms*, nos. 6, 9.

<sup>9</sup> See *Essential Norms*, no. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Charter*, Arts. 5, 14; *Essential Norms*, no. 12.

<sup>11</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 142 §1, 149, 157; *Charter*, Arts. 2, 17; cf. *Charter*, Art. 6; *Essential Norms*, Arts. 4, 7, 9, 13.

- i. Issuance of discipline based on inappropriate conduct not constituting sexual abuse of a minor;
  - ii. Voluntary resignation from office;
  - iii. Involuntary removal from office;
  - iv. Removal or restriction of ministerial faculties;
  - v. Dispensation from, or prohibition of, wearing clerical attire;
  - vi. Transfer of the cleric to a suitable assignment;
  - vii. Refusal of commendatory letter to exercise ministry outside of the Diocese of Crookston;
  - viii. Requirement to disclose allegation to appropriate parties;
  - ix. Mentoring, monitoring, counseling, or other assistance programs;
  - x. Written warning or rebuke, or penance;
  - xi. Prohibition of contact with specific persons or categories of persons.
- b. The Diocese of Crookston shall not assign a cleric for a position in public ministry or a position that provides access to minors who has a substantiated claim or pending credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against him or who is otherwise deemed unsuitable for ministry.<sup>12</sup>
- c. The Bishop may take appropriate non-penal actions to restrict public ministry of clerics under his jurisdiction in order to provide for ecclesiastical discipline, determine the suitability of a cleric for ministry, or to repair scandal, restore justice, and reform offending behavior.<sup>13</sup>
- d. Decisions that affect the status or ministry of a cleric will be issued in writing, and the cleric will be provided the opportunity to pursue recourse through a canonical process.<sup>14</sup>

## **E. Disclosure**

1. At the time a cleric is removed from ministry due to a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, public disclosure will be made of the following: a credible allegation has been received, the allegation has been reported to law enforcement, the cleric is presumed innocent, and the cleric has been removed from ministry pending conclusion of the investigation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Charter*, Art. 5; *Essential Norms*, nos. 6, 8, 9, 12.

<sup>13</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 142 §1, 149, 157, 381, 1341; *Charter*, Arts. 6, 12–13, 17; *Essential Norms*, Arts. 7, 9, 13.

<sup>14</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 47–58; *Essential Norms*, Art. 13.

<sup>15</sup> *Charter*, Arts. 5, 7; *Essential Norms*, nos. 6, 13.

2. The Diocese of Crookston shall disclose any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to any Diocese, Catholic entity or secular employer who inquiries about the existence of any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor with regard to a past or present Diocese of Crookston cleric, to the extent disclosure is allowed by federal and state law. The Diocese of Crookston shall also disclose the status or resolution of the allegation as reflected in its records, as allowed by federal and state law.<sup>16</sup>
3. If an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is determined to be substantiated, the following, if known, will be disclosed publicly on the Diocese of Crookston website: name, date of birth, date of ordination, known assignment history, the diocese or religious order, date removed from ministry, current city of residence, and current ministry status.<sup>17</sup>
4. The Diocese of Crookston shall make public disclosures of substantiated claims of sexual abuse of minors by clerics and pending credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clerics that are under investigation. In each case of a substantiated claim, the Diocese of Crookston will add the name of the cleric to the disclosure section of its website. Public disclosures under this paragraph shall be made as soon as reasonably practicable but, in any event, no later than forty-five (45) days after the relevant determination. The Diocese of Crookston can also share this information with the public by issuing and posting a press release on its website.
5. The Diocese of Crookston shall not recommend, and prohibits a cleric or Diocesan employee from recommending, an employee for a position that provides access to minors if the employee has a substantiated claim or pending credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against him or her.
6. The Diocese of Crookston shall publish regularly in *Our Northland Diocese* newspaper a statement urging victims of sexual abuse of a minor to contact law enforcement to make a report of the abuse.<sup>18</sup>
7. The Diocese of Crookston will provide law enforcement in the appropriate jurisdiction with the known residential address of each cleric having a substantiated claim or pending credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

#### **F. Rights of Persons Accused of Sexual Abuse of a Minor<sup>19</sup>**

1. Accused Church personnel and adult volunteers shall be afforded due process during the investigation in accordance with, state and federal law and other applicable norms.
2. During the investigation, an accused cleric is accorded the presumption of innocence.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Essential Norms*, nos. 12–13.

<sup>17</sup> *Charter*, Art. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Charter*, Arts. 1, 4, 12.

<sup>19</sup> See *Essential Norms*, nos. 2, 13.

<sup>20</sup> See *Charter*, Art. 5; *Essential Norms*, n. 6; 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 1321.



3. Appropriate steps shall be taken to protect a cleric's reputation during the investigative process and restore his reputation if the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated.<sup>21</sup>
4. The cleric will be informed of the allegation and encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. If necessary, the Bishop or his delegate may appoint and provide canonical counsel for the cleric.<sup>22</sup>
5. At all times, the cleric retains his fundamental right to protect his privacy. The cleric may be requested to provide private or confidential information as part of the canonical process, or to comply with appropriate medical and psychological assessments or care at a facility mutually acceptable to the Diocese of Crookston and the cleric. Such psychological or medical services will be conducted at no expense to the cleric and in a professional, dignified manner. Reports of psychological or medical assessments or services will remain confidential and disclosure will be limited to necessary parties and as required by law.<sup>23</sup>
6. The cleric has the right to protection against self-incrimination. He cannot be compelled to testify or take an oath prior to testifying during the course of the investigation.<sup>24</sup>
7. The cleric has the right to review and respond to the allegation prior to the conclusion of the investigation, and to appear in person before the Ministerial Review Board prior to the Ministerial Review Board making a recommendation as to his fitness for ministry.<sup>25</sup>
8. The cleric has the right to self-defense.<sup>26</sup> This includes but is not limited to the right to the following:
  - a. Be represented by an advocate or counsel;
  - b. To know the nature of the complaint and the identity of the person who is alleged to have been harmed, whenever possible;
  - c. Be heard and present evidence and proofs;
  - d. Review evidence and proofs of the case;
  - e. Present a written and oral defense;

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<sup>21</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 220; *Charter*, Art. 5; *Essential Norms*, no. 13.

<sup>22</sup> See *Charter*, Art. 5; *Essential Norms*, no. 8.a.

<sup>23</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 220; *Essential Norms*, no. 7.

<sup>24</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 1728 §2.

<sup>25</sup> See *Essential Norms*, no. 6.

<sup>26</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 221.

- f. Receive a written decision with the reasons for the decision expressed at least in summary;
  - g. Respond to or challenge the decision, including through a canonical process of recourse.
9. The cleric will be notified of the results of the investigation.<sup>27</sup>
10. The cleric has the right to basic sustenance, remuneration, and social assistance, consistent with his condition.<sup>28</sup>
11. The cleric has the right to due process carried out without unnecessary delay.
12. The cleric may be provided with therapeutic professional assistance, voluntarily and at no cost to the cleric, during the time of leave, during the pendency of the investigation, and after the conclusion of the process, consistent with his condition.<sup>29</sup>

**G. Rights of Those Accusing Clergy or Church Personnel of Sexual Abuse of a Minor<sup>30</sup>**

- 1. All who report allegations of abuse or suspected sexual abuse of a minor have the right to first inform law enforcement. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will provide assistance in identifying the appropriate law enforcement agency if necessary.<sup>31</sup>
- 2. All who report allegations of abuse or suspected sexual abuse of a minor have the right to make the report to or seek a response from the Diocese of Crookston.<sup>32</sup>
- 3. All who act in good faith and report knowledge, suspicion, or concern of sexual abuse of minors by clergy or Church personnel shall be afforded protection against retaliation.<sup>33</sup>
- 4. The identity of victims/survivors will be protected from disclosure in so far as possible. The identity of others reporting suspicion of sexual abuse of minors will be kept confidential, in so far as possible. However, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. All who are abused or report abuse have the right to maintain their good reputation and protect their privacy.<sup>34</sup>
- 5. Anonymous allegations may be made in writing or by calling the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Anonymous allegations will be assessed and investigated.

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<sup>27</sup> See *Essential Norms*, no. 6.

<sup>28</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 281, 384.

<sup>29</sup> See 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 384; cf. *Essential Norms*, no. 7.

<sup>30</sup> See *Charter*, Art. 2; *Essential Norms*, no. 13.

<sup>31</sup> *Charter*, Art. 2; *Essential Norms*, no. 11.

<sup>32</sup> See *Charter*, Art. 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Whistleblower Policy*; *Charter*, Art. 7; *Essential Norms*, no. 13.

<sup>34</sup> 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 220; *Charter*, Art. 7; *Essential Norms*, no. 13.

6. All who have been harmed by clergy or Church personnel have a right to make a report, be heard and respected, and be offered healing assistance, reconciliation, services, and support to the extent appropriate, including spiritual, pastoral, and emotional care.<sup>35</sup>
7. All who are abused, or report abuse have the right to request assistance in preparing their report, or to request spiritual and emotional support, from the Diocese of Crookston. Requests for mental health or other professional assistance may be referred to an appropriate third party or to the Diocese of Crookston Victim Assistance Coordinator.<sup>36</sup>
8. No settlement agreement will bind parties to confidentiality, unless this is requested by the claimant.<sup>37</sup>
9. Persons alleging sexual abuse of a minor should be provided with: (1) an adequate explanation of the Diocese of Crookston process and procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, including its policy on reporting to civil authorities; (2) advice that the Diocese of Crookston shall endeavor to conduct its investigation with appropriate discretion and, to the extent possible, protect the privacy and reputations of both the person reporting as well as the person about whom the report was made; and (3) a timely response to inquiries and, as necessary, periodic update(s) as to the status or resolution of the allegation.

#### **H. Assistance/Pastoral Care of Persons Who Have Been Sexually Abused by Clergy<sup>38</sup>**

1. The Diocese of Crookston commits to the healing and wellbeing of victims/survivors and their families. The Diocese of Crookston will refer to outside agencies to provide victim assistance services for those harmed by clergy sexual abuse or other misconduct in ministry.<sup>39</sup>
  - a. This assistance includes crisis response, mental health assessments and referrals, and additional support for counseling or therapy.
  - b. Financial resources are available for professional services for victims/survivors of abuse.
2. In instances where a claim of sexual abuse of a minor is substantiated, Diocese of Crookston leadership will offer to meet or if requested will meet with the victim/survivor or his or her support person(s) as may be reasonably arranged, with due respect for the needs of the victim/survivor.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See *Charter*, Arts. 1–2.

<sup>36</sup> See *Charter*, Arts. 1–2.

<sup>37</sup> See *Charter*, Arts. 2–3.

<sup>38</sup> See *Charter*, Art. 1.

<sup>39</sup> See *Essential Norms*, no. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Charter*, Art. 1.

3. In instances where a claim of sexual abuse of a minor is substantiated, the Bishop will offer on behalf of the Diocese of Crookston (or if requested by the victim/survivor), to send a personally signed letter of apology to the victim/survivor.