



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA OFFICE FOR COMMUNICATIONS

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NATIONWIDE SERVICE LAUNCHED TO REPORT ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INVOLVING CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) has been established as a result of the ongoing commitment of the Catholic bishops of the United States to carrying out Vos Estis Lux Mundi.

Contextual Background

In May 2019, Pope Francis released his apostolic letter, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* as a global means of addressing the issue of sexual abuse and the accountability of bishops in the Catholic Church. *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* places upon the metropolitan archbishops the responsibility for receiving and assessing reports involving bishops that pertain to allegations of sexual abuse and related misconduct.

In June 2019, one month after Pope Francis issued his directive, the bishops of the United States convened for their regular general assembly in Baltimore and approved the implementation plan for carrying out the directives of the Holy Father in our country.

Today's Announcement

Today, dioceses throughout the country are sharing the announcement that the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) has been launched.

CBAR is a service 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. Individuals may go to ReportBishopAbuse.org to file a report or call (800) 276-1562.

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

- forced someone to perform or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority;
- performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person;
- produced, exhibited, possessed, or distributed child pornography, or recruited or induced a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions;
- or, a diocesan or eparchial bishop, or a cleric overseeing a diocese/eparchy in the absence

of a diocesan or eparchial bishop, who has intentionally interfered with a civil or church investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by another cleric or religious.

When a report is received, it will be forwarded to the local metropolitan archbishop who will undertake the responsibility of initially assessing the report. In the event that a report is received that concerns a metropolitan archbishop, it will be forwarded to the bishop of the senior suffragan diocese by the independent third-party reporting system. In the Province of Pennsylvania the senior suffragan diocese is the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez is the metropolitan archbishop of the Province of Philadelphia. That metropolitan province is comprised of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Diocese of Allentown, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, the Diocese of Erie, the Diocese of Greensburg, the Diocese of Harrisburg, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and the Diocese of Scranton.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) does not replace existing reporting systems for complaints against priests, deacons, religious or laity. CBAR was designed as a mechanism to respond to complaints against bishops for issues related to sexual misconduct. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia strongly encourages anyone making a complaint of alleged criminal activity to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to make a report. Likewise, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in keeping with policy, will report any alleged criminal activity to law enforcement.

Information on Resources to Support Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Reporting Allegations of Sexual Abuse Against Archdiocesan Clergy, Employees, and Volunteers

For more than 15 years, the Archdiocese, along with the Church at large, has put in place a wide range of reforms to protect young people. We have a zero-tolerance policy for clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who engage in abuse of children or misconduct with minors and take immediate action when an accusation is made.

Relevant information can be found at <https://childyouthprotection.org> and <http://archphila.org/archdiocesan-offices/office-of-investigations/>.

In addition to our efforts at abuse prevention, the Archdiocese also provides ongoing, significant support for survivors of abuse and their families. We encourage victims to come forward, and we will continue our extensive efforts to help victims of sexual abuse heal.

To report the sexual misconduct by anyone in diocesan ministry who is not a bishop, immediately contact your local law enforcement agency and/or the Archdiocesan Office of Investigations at 1-888-930-9010. Mandated reporters are required to call ChildLine, which is staffed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services at 1-800-932-0313.

To report a violation of The Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries, contact the Archdiocesan Office for Investigations at 1-888-930-9010.

If you need support or assistance, victim services and referrals are available through the Victim Assistance Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia at 1-888-800-8780 or www.childyouthprotection.org.

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Editor's Note: For further information regarding efforts on the part of the Archdiocese to protect the children and young people entrusted to her care as well as to assist survivors on their journey to healing, please visit www.AOPPledgetoProtect.com.