Diocese of Cleveland
Questions and answers regarding the clergy sexual abuse scandal

This document has been created to answer questions, in summary form, about how the Diocese of Cleveland handles sexual abuse allegations, what we do to prevent such abuse, how we train people who have contact with youth and how we form men for priesthood.

1. How can I report the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric or other representatives of the Diocese of Cleveland?

All sexual abuse of minors should first be reported immediately to local law enforcement in the county where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. Reports of abuse by a member of the clergy or an employee of the Diocese of Cleveland should also be made to the diocese's victim assistance coordinator, who can be reached by telephone at 216-334-2999 or by email at response_services@dioceseofcleveland.org.

2. What changes for the protection of children were made by the Church in 2002?

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) adopted 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." These documents set forth a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and include guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, prevention and the creation of a safe environment for children. The charter conveys a zero tolerance policy for acts of child sex abuse by Catholic clergy. It establishes policies around screening clergy, staff and volunteers who work with children; mandatory reporting of all abuse allegations to civil authorities and to Church leadership; safe environment training; formation of clergy; as well as outreach to survivors of abuse.

3. What policies are in place in the Diocese of Cleveland to protect our youth?

The Diocese of Cleveland's "Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse" (Revised 2016) is a comprehensive policy in conformity with the USCCB's "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The diocese also has an additional guiding document: "The Standards of Conduct For Ministry" (Revised 2016). A copy of the "Policy and the Standards of Conduct" is available on the diocesan website at Protecting God's Children – Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. These policies must be read and observed by all priests, deacons, extern priests and deacons, seminarians, religious sisters and brothers, lay ecclesial ministers, all employees and volunteers of the diocese who work with children throughout the eight counties of the diocese. The policy and standards express the commitment of the Diocese of Cleveland to the safety of children. The policy addresses the need for prevention through education of all those working with children, as well as of parents and children themselves. The policy also mandates careful screening of all clergy, employees and volunteers who work with children. Further, the policy provides diocesan requirements for the reporting and investigation of reports suggesting sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, and assures a means of outreach to those who have been abused and

the communities harmed by those actions. The policy also calls for an independent body of lay individuals, known as the Review Board, to monitor and oversee the investigation of all reports of sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

4. What does the "Policy for Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse" (Revised 2016) require?

Ever mindful of the great importance which the Catholic Church places on the care and training of young people, the Diocese of Cleveland adopted this policy to cover the following areas of importance: 1) Prevention efforts, including education, screening background checks and compliance. 2) Reporting procedures, including how personnel are to make reports; necessity of reporting to civil authorities; reports to the diocese; and how the accused person is handled. 3) The policy also covers the diocesan response to allegations and outreach to victims; outlines the duties of the Review Board; outlines proceedings regarding clerics and the review process; and communications throughout the process.

5. What do the "Standards of Conduct for Ministry" require?

The dignity of each member of our Church calls us to maintain the highest levels of compassion and respect as we fulfill our mission. The "Standards of Conduct for Ministry" are an important tool for maintaining such professionalism and boundaries in respecting the dignity of all persons and in all that we do. The policy covers such areas as pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, confidentiality, conduct with youth, sexual conduct, reporting professional misconduct, the well-being of the church personnel and volunteers, the proper use of social media and more. These standards allow us to govern our work and our behavior so that we are all serving the mission in a healthy and life-giving way.

6. Does the diocese's policy require reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and cooperation with law enforcement?

Yes. All Church personnel or others who are working for the diocese in an official or professional capacity, who know or have information that suggests that a child has been sexually abused by Church personnel, are required to report the knowledge or suspicion to civil authorities. This requirement applies to all priests, deacons, employees and volunteers of the diocese and of diocesan parishes, institutions and organizations, regardless of whether or not they are mandated to report under civil law. The Diocese of Cleveland is committed to cooperating fully with local law enforcement in the investigation of reported sexual abuse.

7. How does the diocese investigate a sexual abuse claim and what steps are taken in response?

All claims of sexual abuse of minors by a cleric are first reported to the appropriate public legal authorities. In addition to any investigation by a public legal authority, all claims against a living cleric are referred to the diocesan Review Board for investigation. A professional investigator, monitored by the Review Board, then gathers all available information about the facts and circumstances surrounding the alleged abuse. The investigation will include an interview of the victim and the accused cleric as well as consideration of other pertinent information.

If, after an initial review of the facts, the claim has at least the appearance of being real or genuine, the Review Board will recommend to the bishop that the accused cleric should be

withdrawn from ministry pending the completion of the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation to the Review Board's satisfaction, the Review Board will make a recommendation to the bishop that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred if: 1) the accused cleric admits to sexual abuse, 2) a civil court of criminal law finds the accused cleric guilty of a crime that involves sexual abuse, or 3) it is determined that, by a preponderance of the evidence, it is more likely than not that the accused cleric committed sexual abuse.

A canonical process then follows, including a referral of the matter to the appropriate office of the Vatican. If it is then established, according to Church law, that even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the offending cleric will be permanently removed from ecclesiastical ministry and, if warranted, removed from the priesthood or diaconate.

8. How are Church personnel trained to prevent sexual abuse?

All priests, seminarians, deacons, deacon candidates, religious men and women, lay ecclesial ministers, employees and volunteers who work with children are required to attend a safe environment training course that outlines best practices in the field of safety of children. The program trains adults to recognize the warning signs of abuse and the grooming behaviors of adults who have inappropriate relationships with children. It also outlines the best ways to communicate concerns. It emphasizes the importance of reporting all suspicions of abuse. The VIRTUS® program, which is in use in the diocese, also includes an ongoing education component which provides bulletins on topics related to protecting children from many forms of abuse. All Church personnel and volunteers are required to submit to a background check before ministering with children. These efforts allow us to create and maintain safe environments for our children. Since implementing these programs, 154,000 adults have been trained and background checked in our ongoing efforts to create safe environments for our children.

9. What does the diocese do to evaluate and support compliance at the parish, school or agency, etc. level?

The Office for the Protection of Children & Youth in the Diocese of Cleveland, which is responsible for monitoring compliance, offers training and supportive services to all the parishes, schools, agencies, etc. in the best practices for creating safe environments where children can grow and thrive. The office collects data annually from each institution in regard to its compliance with the policies and procedures of the diocese. An onsite audit is conducted on a regular basis to ensure that those responsible at the local level know the best practices to maintain the safety protocols for our children and youth. This office is also responsible for providing the training for the facilitators who are conducting the VIRTUS® and Praesidium™ training programs for all those who will be working with the children.

10. Is there outside verification of the Diocese of Cleveland's compliance with these prevention practices?

The diocese participates in the USCCB annual review and audit on the implementation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The audit is conducted by an independent third party, who reviews the internal processes of prevention training; background screening completion; the processing of all reports of abuse and support of victims reported presently and in the past, and any other practices that are in effect to create safe environments. The auditors are also invited to visit local parishes and schools so that

they may see first-hand how the policies are followed. This audit is completed on an annual basis. The Diocese of Cleveland has been found to be in compliance every year since the audit began in 2004.

11. How does the Diocese of Cleveland help survivors of abuse?

Survivors of abuse are offered the compassionate care of the Victim Assistance Coordinator, the pastoral and spiritual support of the Church and counseling assistance with a counselor of their choosing, for as long as it is helpful. As each person and the circumstances surrounding the offense committed against them is different, a variety of other means of assistance may also be employed to help them to gain healing and peace.

12. Does my offertory donation to my parish or donations to Catholic Charities or the Diocese of Cleveland go toward any abuse settlement/fund or abuse-related legal fees?

No offertory money, Catholic Charities contributions, school tuition, miscellaneous diocesan/parish/school fundraising or contribution income, Rooted in Faith campaign money, etc. has been used for the settlement of claims or payment of legal expenses. These monies are used to fund the annual operations of the parish, school, Catholic Charities, other diocesan entity or specified restricted purpose where they were contributed and/or for which they were raised. Financial payments made by the Diocese of Cleveland to settle abuse claims, cover legal expenses and provide care for victims were substantially completed in 2012, although small ongoing payments do occur primarily in support of any continuing medical needs of the victims. These expenditures were and continue to be made from the diocese's property and casualty reserve fund. This is an emergency fund that was established nearly 40 years ago and consists of money that was not otherwise designated for diocesan operations or social services.

13. What is being done to ensure healthy and well-formed future priests and deacons?

The application process for entering the seminary and diaconal programs is multi-layered and follows very stringent standards. The candidates first enter a discernment process with the diocesan vocation director through discernment retreats and conversations. These conversations and interactions help the director evaluate each individual on a personal and informal level. Eventually, the director conducts a formal, pre-application interview with the candidate to discuss all areas pertaining to ministerial lifestyle including prayer life, sexuality, physical health, emotional health, academic background, family-of-origin experiences, financial history and employment history. Once an individual begins to understand and demonstrate evidence of a call to the priesthood or diaconate and once the director has reached a similar conclusion that God might be calling the man to discern more seriously a call to ministry, then the director may give permission for the individual to begin the formal application process.

14. What does the formal application process for formation require?

Candidates who apply for affiliation as seminarians with the Diocese of Cleveland are required to complete several different rigorous screenings conducted by various professionals. All applicants undergo a battery of psychological tests with a licensed psychologist who prepares a comprehensive report of clinical scores, professional assessment

and recommendations for each candidate. This evaluation addresses an applicant's emotional health, maturity level, family background, psycho-sexual health and ability to maintain appropriate boundaries. In addition, all applicants undergo a thorough evaluation by a medical psychiatrist to evaluate his family background, sexual history and any immediate concerns regarding addictions. Each applicant is also given background checks including, state and federal criminal background checks, personal credit checks and motor vehicle reports. Biographical information on candidates is also collected, along with academic records. Evaluations are requested from several references, including priests, laity, co-workers and teachers. After a thorough review of these components, the Seminary Admissions Board conducts an interview with the candidate. After the interview and discussion, the board makes a recommendation to the rector about the suitability of the candidate for seminary studies. For seminarians from other dioceses, their vocation director utilizes the same professionals that do assessment for the seminary in order to maintain benchmarks set by the seminary formation team.

15. What is involved in the formation of clerics?

Seminary formation is a rigorous process that takes normally nine years to complete. This is a full-time commitment on the part of the candidate to prepare for ministry in the Church. Seminarians take part in a multifaceted training program that is based around four pillars of formation: human formation, spiritual formation, pastoral formation and intellectual formation. These pillars are used to evaluate the candidates' fitness for ministry as they move through the formation program. Any candidate who does not meet the thresholds of expected competency in any of these areas is dismissed from the formation program and not ordained for ministry.

Seminarians are regularly evaluated by a team of experts at the seminary, including clergy, religious sisters, lay women and men, psychological professionals and professors. Through ministry immersion experiences and parish internship experiences, seminarians are evaluated by clergy, as well as lay men and women of the parish supervising the formation of each candidate, providing feedback on formation reports and assessing the aptitude of a candidate for priestly ministry.

The human pillar of formation focuses on the overall physical, mental and psycho-sexual health of the individual. In particular, the seminarian is taught how to live a healthy lifestyle with a focus on being able to form healthy relationships with others, while also maintaining proper professional boundaries. The spiritual pillar of formation emphasizes the forming of a seminarian to be a man of prayer who is able to lead others deeper in their own relationship with God. The intellectual pillar of formation provides the man with a thorough understanding of philosophy and theology. Most seminarians complete one or more graduate degrees during their seminary studies. Finally, the pastoral pillar of formation provides seminarians opportunities to learn how to effectively minister to people in various settings, while also providing formators opportunities to evaluate a seminarian's competency and effectiveness in ministering to others. Because Cleveland has its own seminary, the yearly field education reports provide a complete evaluation each year of the seminarian's progress.

During seminarian formation, each seminarian's progress in achieving thresholds of competency in each of the pillars of formation is closely monitored by a formation advisor. Additionally, each seminarian is mentored by a spiritual director who meets regularly with the candidate to help him understand whether or not he is truly being called by God to serve the Church as a priest. Considering the painful scandals caused by clergy sexual abuse in the Church, bimonthly rector's conferences and discussion within formation groups is especially focused on identifying abnormal sexual behavior by priestly candidates in order to prevent them from entering into ministry. At times, professional psychologists speak to the seminarians about boundaries, healthy chaste living and time management. All seminarians complete VIRTUS® training and sign a written document that they have read diocesan policies regarding working with minors and vulnerable adults. Further, seminary formation provides many forums for seminarians to gain a mature understanding of their own sexuality and to learn how to live a commitment to celibacy in the context of healthy, meaningful relationships with other people.

Deacon formation is a rigorous process that usually takes five years to complete. This is a part-time commitment during which the candidate prepares for ministry in the Church. Deacon candidates take part in a multifaceted training program that is based around four pillars of formation: human formation, spiritual formation, pastoral formation and intellectual formation. These pillars are used to evaluate the candidates' fitness for ministry as they move through the formation program. Any candidate who does not meet the threshold of expected competency in any of these areas is dismissed from the formation program and not ordained for ministry.

Deacon candidates are regularly evaluated by a team of experts, including clergy, religious, lay women and men, psychological professionals and professors. Through field education experiences at various parishes, deacon candidates are evaluated by clergy, as well as lay men and women of the parishes. Further, the Diocesan Evaluations and Scrutinies Committee assists the director of the Diaconate Formation Office in supervising the formation of each candidate, providing feedback on formation reports and assessing the aptitude of a candidate for diaconal ministry.

The human pillar of formation focuses on the overall physical, mental and psycho-sexual health of the individual. In particular, the deacon candidate is taught how to live a healthy lifestyle with a focus on being able to form healthy relationships with others, while also maintaining proper professional boundaries. The spiritual pillar of formation emphasizes the forming of a candidate to be a man of prayer who is able to lead others deeper in their own relationship with God. The academic pillar of formation provides the man with a thorough understanding of theology. Finally, the pastoral pillar of formation provides candidates opportunities to learn how to effectively minister to people in various settings, while also providing the formators opportunities to evaluate a candidate's competency and effectiveness in ministering to others.

During diaconal formation, each candidate's progress in achieving thresholds of competency in each of the pillars of formation is closely monitored by the formation director. Additionally, each candidate is mentored by a spiritual director and a deacon-mentor who meets regularly with the candidate to help him understand whether or not he is truly being called by God to serve the Church as a deacon. Considering the painful scandals caused by clergy sexual abuse in the Church, diaconal formation is especially focused on identifying

abnormal sexual behavior by diaconal candidates in order to prevent them from entering into ministry. Further, diaconal formation provides many forums for candidates to gain a mature understanding of their sexuality and to learn how to live a commitment to marriage and/or celibacy in the context of healthy, meaningful relationships with other people.

16. After the initial training and screenings of priests and deacons, how often are prevention methods updated?

Criminal background checks are completed on all clergy, staff and volunteers who work with children throughout the eight counties of the Diocese of Cleveland. Initial screenings are completed via Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation & Identification and/or FBI fingerprint background checks. Repeat background checks are thereafter conducted at regular intervals, with the first occurring five years after the initial screening. Currently, the diocese conducts these repeat background checks through a secure online provider which runs the checks on a quarterly basis, thereby alerting the diocese of any issues in a timely fashion. As to training, all clergy, staff and volunteers who work with children attend a live training class and then receive monthly training bulletins in an ongoing format.

17. How does the diocese ensure that clergy from another diocese or religious order are screened for service in the Diocese of Cleveland?

A priest or deacon from another diocese or from a religious order who will be temporarily visiting the Diocese of Cleveland and who wishes to function in a ministerial capacity within our diocese will only be allowed to do so if the Diocese receives a letter of good standing (referred to as a "Letter of Suitability") from the priest or deacon's home diocese or religious congregation. This letter verifies that the priest or deacon has never been accused of misconduct with a minor, that his background check is clear and that he has completed a safe environment training program.

Extern clergy (i.e. priests or deacons who are assigned for a more permanent period of time for ministry within the diocese) are required to comply with the same standards as described in the answer to Question 3.

18. Has the diocese ever opened its files for examination by civil law enforcement?

In 2002, the Diocese of Cleveland was subject to a grand jury investigation conducted by the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. That investigation lasted approximately seven months, during which time the prosecutor's office was given full access to any files that it desired to review.

The diocese is aware of and respectful of the privacy and other rights of both those accused of abusive conduct and those who have made accusations. Consistent with this, the diocese has and will continue to comply with all obligations it may have in the context of both civil litigation and any administrative investigations.

19. Will the diocese release information on priests and deacons who have been accused of sexual abuse?

Recognizing the importance of publicly acknowledging and identifying those clerics who have abused children, the diocese, in April of 2002, first began to publish the names of clerics removed from ministry as a result of sexual abuse of a minor. These postings, which

have been updated as needed since that time, can be found by going to the diocese's public website (dioceseofcleveland.org), clicking on the Child Protection tab, and then clicking "News and Notices." In addition to the names of those clerics removed from ministry since April of 2002, the diocese is in the process of reviewing its files with the goal of publishing the names of all clerics who, as best it can determine, sexually abused a minor and/or who were removed from ministry as a result of sexual abuse of a minor. All of this information will then be posted in user-friendly list format.

20. Is child sexual abuse occurring in the Church with the same frequency as in the past?

Soon after the USCCB's adoption of the charter in 2002, the USCCB's National Review Board commissioned the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to conduct an independent study into the nature and scope of the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and deacons in the United States during the period of 1950 to 2002. The results of this study, commonly known as the "John Jay Report," were published in 2004. As part of their study, the John Jay researchers reviewed the number of allegations of clergy sexual abuse of minors from 1950 to 2002, nationally. Separately, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University has collected the numbers of new allegations of sexual abuse by clergy reported since 2004. The distribution of cases reported to CARA is nearly identical to the distribution of cases, over time, in the "John Jay Report." The graph below shows the results of CARA's research. In short, the best available data suggests that the rate of abuse in the Church peaked in the 1970s and then dramatically decreased from the mid-1980s to the present.

21. What measures are in place for overseeing bishops and cardinals?

Cardinals and bishops fall under the jurisdiction of the Holy See (Vatican). The USCCB is committed to addressing misconduct by members of the hierarchy and is currently working with the Holy See to open new and confidential channels for reporting allegations against members of the hierarchy. For example, in the most recent case involving sexual abuse and harassment by Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, the USCCB is pursuing a thorough investigation.

22. How will the diocese address the issue of sexual abuse in the Church going forward?

The Diocese of Cleveland, its bishop and all leadership are profoundly sorry for the deep pain and tremendous suffering that has been endured by so many at the hands of members of the clergy. The diocese is deeply committed to combating all forms of abuse in the Church and to working with clergy, professional experts, the laity and other interested parties of good will to root out any vestiges of wrongdoing and to support best practices in the creation of safe environments. We adamantly assure everyone that the Diocese of Cleveland does not and will not tolerate the sexual abuse of children and will not allow clerics to remain in ministry if it is determined that they have sexually abused a child -- even once. We ask all the faithful to pray for the victims and for us as we go forward carrying out this vital and necessary mission.