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**DIOCESE OF
ROCKFORD**

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PRESS RELEASE

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

ROCKFORD – 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 and bishop accountability in the global Catholic Church. *Vos estis* calls upon the metropolitan archbishops to undertake the responsibilities for receiving and assessing reports involving bishops that pertain to sexual abuse and related misconduct. In June 2019, 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*, 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. Individuals may go to ReportBishopAbuse.org in order to make a report. Reports are also accepted via (800) 276-1562.

When a report is received, it will be forwarded to the local metropolitan archbishop who will undertake the responsibility of initially assessing the report. Cardinal Blase Cupich of the Archdiocese of Chicago is the metropolitan who presides over this province which includes the following dioceses: Chicago, Joliet, Rockford, Peoria, Springfield and Belleville.

The Diocese of Joliet is a suffragan diocese of the Archdiocese of Chicago and our metropolitan is Archbishop Blase Cupich. In the event that a report is received that concerns Archbishop Cupich, then it will be forwarded to Bishop Daniel Jenky, CSC, who is the senior suffragan bishop of this local province.

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.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) does not replace existing reporting systems for complaints against priests, deacons, religious or laity. CBAR was designed to respond only to complaints against bishops for issues related to sexual misconduct.

The reporting of sexual misconduct by anyone in diocesan ministry who is not a bishop, such as priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, or lay persons working or volunteering for the Church should continue to be handled in accordance with the Diocese of Rockford's child protection policy (<https://www.rockforddiocese.org/safe-environment/report-abuse/>) and with proper civil authorities.

For more information on the reporting service and how it works, visit: ReportBishopAbuse.org.

While the mandate by Pope Francis in Vos estis 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.

FYI: Pope Francis has structured the handling and investigation of the complaints using the metropolitan archbishops. What does this mean?

- The Catholic Church in the U.S. has 32 provinces.
- Each province has one archdiocese plus several dioceses.
- The head of the archdiocese (the archbishop) is also known as the "metropolitan," and he presides over the province.
- The other dioceses are referred to as "suffragan" dioceses.

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About Catholic Diocese of Rockford

Established in 1908, the Diocese of Rockford is comprised of 105 parishes in Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Kane, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties in Northern Illinois serving a Catholic population of more than 300,000. For more about the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, visit rockforddiocese.org