

POLICY
Regarding Sexual Abuse Against Minors by Priests or Deacons
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

The vast majority of clergy, striving to grow in holiness and to minister among God's people in often challenging circumstances, lead exemplary lives of dedication and service. They have offered themselves and sacrificed for their communities in order to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as ordained men. Tragically, however, some have transgressed not only criminal and canon law, but also even the limits of human decency by the sexual abuse of children.

Sexual abuse against minors on the part of clergy is among the most serious of offenses to be faced in our Church today. Such horrendous acts not only harm the victim, but wound the rest of the Church community and society as well.

The Diocese of Brooklyn denounces all sexual abuse, particularly sexual abuse of children on the part of clergy, which, as our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has said, is both sinful and a crime.¹ The Diocese of Brooklyn wishes to do everything possible to see that all people, particularly children, are safe in all pastoral settings. Excuses and rationalizations for such criminal actions will not be accepted.

The Diocese of Brooklyn will continue to respond and reach out with compassion to anyone who has been a victim of clerical sexual abuse. The pain which has been endured is overwhelming and heart wrenching. We nonetheless believe in the power of God's merciful love to help bring about healing, growth and a renewal of hope. The Diocese will continue to assist anyone who has already been a victim of abuse, as well as continue to seek to prevent abuse in the future.

In promulgating this revised Policy², and the accompanying document, Procedures Regarding Sexual Abuse Against Minors by Priests or Deacons, it is the intention of the Diocese of Brooklyn to:

- protect all children from being harmed by sexual abuse on the part of clergy;
- indicate the seriousness with which allegations of sexual abuse are received and the way in which they are dealt;
- express our desire to respect the rights of all persons involved, and to deal with them in a way that is just, compassionate and charitable.

The Policy and Procedures seek to outline ways to eliminate clerical sexual abuse against minors, to reach out with healing and compassion to those victims who have been abused, and to act justly and responsibly toward the members of the clergy who have been accused. While a written policy has been in place since 1987, the Diocese intends to update what has been learned over the years, as well as to incorporate new provisions that have been provided by the authority of the Church. When needed, revisions will be made in order to reflect improved ways to reach these objectives.

By mandate of the undersigned Bishop of Brooklyn, this policy becomes effective for the Diocese of Brooklyn on June 15, 2003, and is to be promulgated by publication in the diocesan newspaper.

Most Reverend Thomas V. Daily, D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn

June 13, 2003
Brooklyn, New York

Notary

¹ Pope John Paul II, "Address to U.S. Cardinals," April 23, 2002.

² In compliance with "Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priest or Deacons," #2.