

Baltimore Province Pastoral Guide to Sexual Abuse

The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province recognize that sexual misconduct by our Members has devastating consequences for victims and their families. We are aware of the effects of this tragic behavior and are steadfast to help those affected.

This Victim's Guide provides information on

- 1) What is sexual misconduct with ministerial relationships,
- 2) What the procedures are for responding to complaints of sexually inappropriate behavior,
- 3) To whom victims of sexual misconduct can turn to help.

Sexual Misconduct in a Ministerial Relationship

A Ministerial relationship is one which a person receives pastoral care from priests, brothers, sisters, spiritual directors and pastoral counselors, among other church workers.

Sexual misconduct is a general term that includes sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexualized conduct or language between co-workers in the church setting. It may include, but not limited to 1) unsolicited sexual advances and propositions, 2) the use of sexually degrading words to describe an individual or his/her body, 3) the telling of inappropriate or sexually charged jokes, 4) retaliation against a co-worker who refuses sexual advances, 5) offers of preferential treatment such as promotions, positive performance evaluations, or favorably assigned duties or shifts in exchange for sexual favors.

Sexual exploitation consists of sexual contact between a Member and person receiving pastoral care from him.

Sexual abuse is sexual contact between a Member and a minor or vulnerable adult.

Sexual exploitation or sexual abuse can include physical contact or actions such as:

Sexual touch or other physical contact that makes the person being touched feel uncomfortable, such as:

- *Giving a sexually charged gift (such as lingerie)
- *A prolonged hug when a brief hug is customary behavior
- *Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate
- *Showing sexually suggestive objects or pornography
- *Sexual intercourse, anal, or oral sex.

Sexual exploitation or sexual abuse can also include verbal behavior such as:

- *Innuendo or sexual talk
- *Suggestive comments
- *Descriptions of sexual experiences, fantasies
- *Sexual propositions

Sexual misconduct – whether harassment, exploitation, or abuse – by a Member, employee, or volunteer is contrary to Catholic morals, doctrine and canon law. It is NEVER acceptable in a pastoral relationship with a parishioner, employee, spiritual director, counseling client, or anyone who has sought the church's ministry.

How Redemptorists Respond to Complaints of Sexual Misconduct

The Redemptorists respond to all allegations of sexual misconduct with great care. To ensure that we handle each instance promptly, thoroughly and compassionately, the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province have appointed a Member to serve as the Victims Assistance Coordinator. He will listen to, understand, and offer help, including appropriate psychological counseling for those affected by sexual misconduct.

The Redemptorists, through the Victims Assistance Coordinator and Investigator, will respond swiftly to evaluate and investigate any accusation of sexual misconduct by a Member.

The Member who has engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor will be subject to a Safety Plan. This prevention program provides appropriate psychological treatment designed by professionals specifically for offenders, and entails ongoing monitoring and supervision for the rest of his life in the Redemptorist community.

Where to Turn for Help

If you or someone you know believe that a Member has violated the boundaries outlined here, we urge you to report such behavior immediately to the Provincial Superior and/or to the Victims Assistance Coordinator. Your case will be handled with the strictest sensitivity and confidentiality.

Contact information for the Redemptorists:

Office of the Provincial
Very Rev. Paul Borowski, C.Ss.R.
Holy Redeemer Residence
3112 – 7th – Street NE
Washington, DC 20017
(202) 529-4410

Victims Assistance Coordinator
Rev. Denis J. Sweeney, C.Ss.R.
Holy Redeemer Residence

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