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

On May 7, 2019, Pope Francis published his Apostolic Letter *Vos estis lux mundi* (“You are the light of the world”) to address the issue of sexual abuse by and the accountability of bishops in the global Catholic Church. This new universal law established a solid reporting system which institutes a metropolitan model to investigate bishops and the requirement that each diocese (and eparchy) establish a system to report abuse and/or cover up of abuse by any bishop.

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 [authorized the design of a third-party system to receive reports](#) of possible violations by bishops of *Vos estis lux mundi*. While anyone could make a report against a bishop at any time, the Pope’s directives allowed until the end of May 2020 for the development of local systems to receive reports. The Catholic bishops of the United States now have in place a nationwide third-party reporting system.

As part of an ongoing commitment to carrying out *Vos estis lux mundi*, 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 abuse, harassment, or cover up of such conduct through a secure, confidential, and professional platform. **Any person can submit a confidential report regarding a bishop, online at [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or by calling (800) 276-1562.**

When a report is received, the report or allegation is transmitted both to the Holy See and to the local metropolitan archbishop who undertakes the responsibility of initially assessing the report. Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is the Metropolitan who presides over the Ohio province which includes the Diocese of Toledo.

**The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting (CBAR) service allows for any person to file a report concerning 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 or has failed to report allegations of sexual abuse committed by another cleric or religious.

**The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting (CBAR) service does not replace existing reporting systems already in place for complaints against priests, deacons, religious or laity. CBAR is 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 Toledo's [Policy for the Protection of Minors and Young People](#) and in accord with the requirements of the proper civil authorities.

For more information on The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting (CBAR) service and how it works, please visit: [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org).

While the unprecedented mandate by Pope Francis in *Vos estis lux mundi* echoes many of the practices that the Catholic Church in the United States had implemented already in 2002 with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, this new order applies specifically to bishops and to the worldwide Catholic Church, making clear the Pope's further commitment to eradicate the scourge of sexual abuse in the Church at a global level.

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*The Diocese of Toledo, established April 15, 1910, encompasses 8,222 square miles in a mixture of urban and rural areas and spans 19 counties across Northwest Ohio, serving approximately 320,000 Catholics in 122 parishes. The Diocese includes Allen, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Henry, Huron, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood and Wyandot counties.*

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