



Ministry Profile

Victim Assistance Coordinator

The Victim Assistance Coordinator must have:

- A sincere commitment to the spiritual and emotional well-being of victims and/or their families;
- An awareness of available psychological and spiritual resources to provide counseling, spiritual assistance and support group assistance;
- An awareness of other social services available to assist victims and/or their families in their search for healing;
- An ability to listen with patience and compassion;
- Access to the Bishop in order to communicate the concerns, needs, or requests of a victim/survivor.

The Pastoral Assistance Coordinator must be:

- A competent professional possessing the ability to interact with therapists, spiritual directors and other professionals regarding care for victims and/or their families;
- Approved both by the Bishop and members of the Diocesan Review Board;
- Be a Catholic in good standing;
- A person knowledgeable of diocesan policies on sexual abuse.

Responsibilities of the Pastoral Assistance Coordinator include:

- Meeting as soon as possible with victims and/or their families and doing an immediate needs assessment;
- Developing a referral list of helping professionals with experience in treating victims of sexual abuse;
- Contacting and referring victims and/or their families to competent professionals, receiving and approving invoices for payment of services;
- Ensuring that psychological services are offered consistent with the highest standards of the profession and applicable civil law;

- Ensuring that all participating professionals are properly licensed or possess equivalent credentials;
- Collaborating with diocesan personnel in the development of programs for healing and reconciliation;
- Serving the Diocesan Review Board in an advisory capacity;
- Providing Diocesan Review Board members a descriptive report of victims' circumstances to assist in the discernment process;
- Maintaining professional standards re confidentiality and privacy with the understanding that confidentiality includes Diocesan Review Board members.

When working with victims, the Pastoral Assistance Coordinator should:

- Clearly outline the kind of professional assistance that will be offered;
- Explain the financial assistance the Diocese will provide for psychological counseling;
- Periodically review the status of the psychological services being received.

“Dioceses/eparchies are to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. Dioceses/eparchies are to have a competent person or persons to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint are to be readily available in printed form in the principal languages in which the liturgy is celebrated in the diocese/eparchy and be the subject of public announcements at least annually.” Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, USCCB, Article 2

“Each diocese/eparchy will designate a competent person to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by priests or deacons.” Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, USCCB, Essential Norms, EN 3

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Erie, Pennsylvania

Revised: February 2007 (Article 2; Essential Norm 3)