

# Misconduct Complaint Process

## Making a Complaint

We recognize that taking the step to report a complaint of sexual abuse or an inappropriate boundary violation by a member of the clergy, a person in leadership or parish ministry serving in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester may be a frightening and difficult experience. For many people, the strength and courage to make such a report often comes after many years of inner distress. Those individuals who have been harmed in this way and have made such reports have increased our awareness and sensitivity regarding the needs of those who have experienced abuse in their lives and the impact it has had on themselves and their families, especially with regard to making an initial complaint. As you contemplate your contact, please be assured that you will be treated respectfully and with compassion and kindness. We are committed to collecting accurate information and offering healing services to those who have been victimized. It is, therefore, not possible to complete a process around complaints that are made anonymously. The following steps outline the process followed to make a complaint to offer assistance in bringing wholeness and healing to those who have suffered abuse.

### Step 1: Call or Write

Any individual who has experienced abuse by a member of the clergy, a person in leadership or parish ministry serving in our diocese should call 507-454-2270, ext. 255 and make a report to the Assistance Coordinator in the Safe Environment Office of the diocese.

...or write via U.S. Mail...

Victim Assistance Coordinator  
Diocese of Winona-Rochester - Safe Environment Office  
55 West Sanborn Street, PO Box 588  
55987

Winona, MN

Please include your contact information and a description of the hurt you have experienced. Include specific names and details in your report and mark the envelope CONFIDENTIAL. *Matters of this nature will not be processed by email.*

### Step 2: Intake Interview\*

The initial call or your written report allows us to contact you and set up a time for an intake interview. The intake interview takes place with the Assistance Coordinator at a mutually agreed upon time and location, as soon as possible. The purpose of this step is to gain accurate information about the hurt you have experienced.

*\*Note: All persons who come forward with an allegation of child sexual abuse, must by law, be reported to local authorities. We stand ready to help in this process.*

*If you are the victim of abuse by clergy or someone in a leadership or ministry position in a parish outside of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, we will work with you to bring your concerns to officials in that diocese to address your complaint.*

It is our desire to make this process as safe as possible and we proceed at the pace you set. If desired, the person bringing forward the complaint may wish to have the support of a knowledgeable companion (often referred to as an advisor/advocate) to accompany them at this or any stage of the process.

During the interview you will be asked to provide your name, date of birth, current address, phone number, name of perpetrator whom the allegation is about, period of time/frequency of abuse and a full description of the nature of the abuse. Each person is also asked to share what you feel would be helpful in finding closure and moving forward because of this hurtful experience.

### **Step 3: Inquiry Process**

Once an interview has been completed, the person making the complaint is given the opportunity to review the written document created from the intake interview. Additions and/or corrections are noted and the complainant is asked to sign the statement. This validates that it is an accurate reflection of what has been reported and allows further inquiry to take place. If additional persons are named as having knowledge of the offenses described, or other parties need to be interviewed, an inquiry process is discussed and arrangements made to collect additional information about the abuse violation.

### **Step 4: Support Services**

We will help you to obtain support by providing a variety of resources that will help you in the event you have experienced ministry-related abuse. The Safe Environment Office of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester offers:

- Information about spiritual directors
- Name of advocates
- Information about counseling through individual/group counseling, therapy and/or support.
- Options for financial resources for insurance co-pays, etc.

### **Step 5: Follow-up Steps**

Ongoing communication is maintained with persons reporting abuse throughout the Misconduct Complaint Process. Those victimized by abuse are informed about ongoing investigation steps and actions taken with the perpetrator.