



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
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**Archdiocese of St. Louis Outlines Policy for Investigating and Reporting Abuse of Minors
by Bishops Following Implementation of National Third-party Hotline**

ST. LOUIS - As the metropolitan bishop responsible for investigating allegations regarding sexual misconduct made against any present or past bishop of the four Missouri dioceses, Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis—along with the leadership of the Archdiocese of St. Louis—today announces updates to the archdiocesan policy for investigation of any such complaints.

In March 2020, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) established the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR), operated by Convercent, Inc., an independent third party which supports organizations worldwide by providing a secure portal for the receipt of complaints related to ethics, compliance and other sensitive matters. The establishment of this system is in response to Pope Francis' May 2019 Apostolic Letter "Vos Estis Lux Mundi," in which the Holy Father called on metropolitan archbishops worldwide to investigate reports of sexual misconduct involving bishops.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint against a bishop of sexual abuse or other related misconduct may make such a report to CBAR at ReportBishopAbuse.org or by calling toll-free **1-800-276-1562**. Following the receipt of a complaint, CBAR will promptly report the complaint to the current metropolitan archbishop, who for Missouri is Archbishop Carlson, as well as to civil authorities who may begin an investigation of their own. In order to begin an investigation, Archbishop Carlson would first be required to inform the Congregation at the Vatican responsible for investigating such allegations. The Vatican then would authorize the metropolitan, Archbishop Carlson, to move forward.

Archbishop Carlson has [previously expressed support](#) of the implementation of the national third-party hotline and reporting policy for abuse by bishops, and he continues to reiterate the utmost importance of the protection of youth:

"Along with the other bishops of Missouri, I am committed to ensuring that all complaints of sexual abuse of a minor are taken seriously—including those about bishops—and to respecting all persons who make or are the subjects of such complaints. I believe the institution of this new system adds necessary independence and diligence to the Catholic Church's efforts, including the 2002 Charter, in keeping protecting our youth a top priority.

- **Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson**
Archbishop of St. Louis

Archbishop Carlson has authorized the use of qualified independent forensic investigators, who are not employees of the Church, to conduct prompt, fair investigations, the results of which will be forwarded to the Holy See for review and potential discipline in accordance with Church law.

Specifically, any allegation against a Missouri bishop of the following types of sexual abuse will be investigated by Archbishop Carlson:

- i. Forcing someone, by violence, threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts;
- ii. Performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person;
- iii. Production, exhibition, possession, distribution or recruitment of minor or vulnerable subjects, including by electronic means, of pornography of children or other vulnerable persons;
- iv. Any intentional interference by a diocesan or eparchial bishop in a civil or church investigation of a cleric or religious for any of the above types of sexual misconduct.

CBAR does not replace existing reporting protocols for allegations against diocesan priests, deacons, religious or lay employees of the Church which have been in place since 2002. Complaints against such clerics and personnel in the Archdiocese of St. Louis should continue to be made both to law enforcement and the Archdiocese of St. Louis' Office of Child and Youth Protection.

More information about the procedures, policies and support for victims in place within the Archdiocese of St. Louis can be found at archstl.org/promise.

To report any knowledge of abuse by any Church personnel, please contact local law enforcement, or call the Missouri Department of Social Services Child Abuse Neglect Hotline Number: 1-800-392- 3738. In addition, anyone who has knowledge of sexual abuse or misconduct by a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis is urged to call the Office of Child and Youth Protection at 314-792-7704. To make a complaint of sexual abuse or other related misconduct against a bishop, visit ReportBishopAbuse.org or call toll-free 1-800-276-1562.

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