



DIOCESE *of* LACROSSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

23 October 2019

My dear brother priests, deacons, members of consecrated life and the lay faithful of the diocese,

May the Lord give you peace.

On 21 June I wrote to you on several matters of great concern and outlined steps we are taking toward fulfilling our promise to protect our young people. Today, I'm detailing the recent changes that have been made to the Child Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures of the Diocese of La Crosse (The Green Book). We continue to learn much more about the necessary care required for the needs of victims, about abuse and its cover-up. This document, among others, serves us well and allows us to address in a compassionate and timely way the evil of sexual abuse of minors by the clergy.

Pursuant to Pope Francis' Motu Proprio *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* and with my strong desire to provide the necessary independence of the Review Board, the Green Book contains these revisions.

1) Procedures for the reporting and investigation of complaints of sexual abuse of minors by clergy have been re-written. (Pages 9 to 12) Rather than initially being given to the Diocesan Bishop, the Complaint Intake Agent will receive all reports except those involving a bishop which will follow the procedure set forth in *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*. The Complaint Intake Agent shall promptly notify the Review Board Chair, the Vicar for Clergy and law enforcement at the outset of the allegation. This step allows for more independence in the process before the case is presented to the diocesan bishop. (Revised 9-25-19).

2) There is a new section outlining the policies and procedures on the publication of clergy names with sufficiently confirmed allegations of child sexual abuse. (Page 13) In order to bring healing, encourage accountability and reinforce our commitment to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the names and ministry details of clergy with confirmed allegations of child sexual abuse will be published on diolc.org and communicated to all parishes within our Diocese for printing in their parish bulletins.

3) The Independent Review Board bylaws have been updated to include directives from Pope Francis' Motu Proprio *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* that call for a greater involvement of the laity with defined authority should there be an allegation against the bishop.

I encourage you to read the Green Book in its entirety. You can view it on diolc.org/safe-environment. Hard copies are being made available to all schools, parishes, and other organizations of the Diocese. It is my hope that these revisions to the Green Book will lead to more compassionate and timely responses to any and all accusations of sexual abuse of children at the hands of clerics.

With personal good wishes and prayers, I am,

Very truly yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William Patrick Callahan
Bishop of La Crosse