



DIOCESE OF BISMARCK

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

Even though the beauty and the goodness of God's gift of human sexuality is recognized and appreciated by all of us, we continue to be faced with the sinful reality of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct.

Although the percentage of people who are afflicted with these tendencies or illnesses in human sexuality may be relatively small, the possibility of any instance of abuse or misconduct requires clear and positive actions through established policies and procedures throughout our Catholic Church.

In the matter of sexual abuse, the Catholic Church knows through experience that some clerics and other church personnel have been accused of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. Whether an allegation is substantiated or not, serious harm and suffering can result. In response to this crisis, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has adopted comprehensive norms and policies for addressing this problem strongly, consistently, and effectively.

Great strides have been made in our diocese to help assure the protection of our children, young people, and vulnerable adults through the implementation of a training program to help identify potential abusers and how to properly respond to those who may have been abused. Thousands of criminal record history checks have also been completed on Catholic school personnel, diocesan and parish employees and volunteers who work regularly and directly with children. In addition, special announcements have been made through the public media and within each of our parishes asking that anyone who may have been abused as a child come forward and report their allegations to the diocese and to civil authorities.

Our efforts continue and will not cease. As Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck, I pledge to you, our Catholic people, and to all in western North Dakota, that the USCCB norms and policies and the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Bismarck will continue to be followed in their entirety.

With God's help and in collaboration with our people, we will continue to work to strengthen the bonds of trust that unite us. May all in the Church experience Christ's healing love and new life.

May Christ fulfill this good work in us and through us.

Sincerely in Christ

Most Reverend David D. Kagan
Bishop of Bismarck