

Frequently asked questions: Restoring trust

What are some of the steps the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has undertaken to prevent sexual abuse of a minor in the Church?

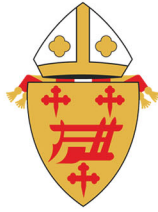
The archdiocese has had policies and directives about child protection in place since 1993, when our Decree on Child Abuse first took effect. When the Decree on Child Abuse was implemented, the archdiocese made a commitment to evaluate the decree and its implementation every five years. The decree was revised and updated in 1998, and the title was changed to the Decree on Child Protection. In 2002, following a widespread revelation of sexual abuse in the Church, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) developed the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. In 2003, the Decree on Child Protection was again revised to be consistent with the USCCB's charter. The archdiocese has continued to revise the decree and adopt the most recent revisions of the USCCB's charter. The latest revision of the Decree on Child Protection took effect on July 1, 2018.

All priests, deacons, seminarians, consecrated religious, lay people, employees and volunteers who have contact with minors are required to complete background checks and Protecting God's Children training program. This program teaches how to identify signs of misconduct and provides best practices for making churches, schools and communities safer. After the initial training, the Protecting God's Children program requires ongoing monthly training to retain certification. Certified individuals are expected to help set the standard of behavior and report any misconduct.

The archdiocese uses [SELECTION.COM](https://www.selection.com), a third-party security firm, to perform background checks. Since 2012, approximately 63,268 people have completed online background checks — approximately 8,240 of those electronic background checks were in 2019. Each individual's background is electronically rechecked quarterly. Fingerprints are completed once for the archdiocese and every five years for the Ohio Department of Education.

Springing from the Decree for Child Protection, the Review Board serves as a consulting body to the archbishop. The Board advises the archbishop in his assessment of allegations of child abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults by clerics, employees and volunteers. Currently, the Board comprises 10 Catholics with outstanding integrity and good judgment who are in full communion with the Church. All credible allegations of abuse are brought to the attention of the Review Board.

The archdiocese participates in the USCCB's annual audit of Catholic dioceses and eparchies in the United States to assess compliance with and implementation of the



policies and programs found within the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. During the audit, an independent firm reviews prevention and reporting training of both children and adults, as well as background checks for those whose service brings them into contact with children. The auditors research the programs the archdiocese uses, the frequency of required training and background checks, and our means of data collection. In addition to the annual audit, an on-site audit is conducted every three years, accompanied by in-person interviews of all key diocesan personnel involved with child and youth protection and victim assistance. The archdiocese has passed every yearly audit since 2006.

In an effort to provide genuine healing and support to victims, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Ministry to Survivors of Abuse coordinator has been serving people in our community for more than a decade. This coordinator helps people with healing and reconciliation after an appalling violation of their human dignity. Every person who makes a substantiated allegation of abuse is offered compassionate care through the pastoral and spiritual support of the Church, as well as counseling assistance with the counselor of their choosing for as long as it is helpful.

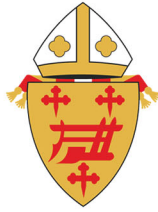
What happens when the Archdiocese of Cincinnati receives a report of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest?

When an allegation is received by any entity of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati concerning sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, it is immediately reported to the civil authorities and to the chancellor. The chancellor confirms the information has been sent to the civil authorities, and then the archdiocese cooperates with the civil authorities in their investigation of the report.

If the allegation has a semblance of truth — meaning it could have possibly happened — and if removing the priest does not interfere with any police investigation, the priest is immediately removed from ministry, pending an investigation. The Ministry to Survivors of Abuse coordinator offers outreach and assistance to the victim and his or her family. If doing so does not interfere with the police investigation, the archdiocese retains a professional investigator to conduct an investigation of the report.

Once the investigation is complete, the report and all relevant documentation are shared with the archdiocese's Review Board, which examines all the available evidence before advising the archbishop on a recommended determination.

No priest who has been found to have sexually abused a minor is eligible for ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.



When did the Archdiocese of Cincinnati begin publishing a list of clerics with substantiated allegations of child abuse?

In 2004, the archdiocese published on its website the first list of clerics with substantiated allegations of child abuse. The list included those incardinated clerics of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati who had cases in progress at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as well as the names of those men who had already been laicized and those who were permanently removed from ministry.

In 2019, Section II of this list was added to include clerics not incardinated in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati but who have ministered in the archdiocese. The names in Section II were provided to the archdiocese and based on investigations conducted by third parties, such as religious orders whose members have ministered in the archdiocese at some point.

Has the Archdiocese of Cincinnati ever opened its files for examination by civil law enforcement?

Yes. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati turned over all relevant files to a sitting grand jury in 2002. Since that time, by a standing protocol, the archdiocese promptly reports any allegation of abuse to the appropriate civil authority in the county in which the alleged abuse occurred.

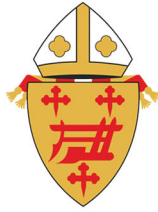
Does the archdiocese notify law enforcement whenever it becomes aware of allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, even when the misconduct took place many years ago?

When an allegation is received by any entity of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, it is immediately reported to the civil authorities and the chancellor. The information is typically reported to the prosecutor's office in the county in which the alleged abuse occurred, even if the misconduct took place many years ago. The archdiocese also cooperates with investigations by law enforcement.

What is the process for reporting sexual abuse of a minor by Church personnel?

Please report any suspected abuse on the part of any agent of the archdiocese to the appropriate civil authorities, typically the prosecutor's office in the county in which the alleged abuse occurred.

Additionally, you can report concerns online (make text a link to Report Misconduct) or by calling the Ministry to Survivors of Abuse coordinator at 513-263-6623 or 1-800-686-2724, ext. 6623.



If you see something, please say something.

If you are a member of the clergy or a Church employee or volunteer and have reason to believe that a minor has been sexually abused by a bishop, priest, deacon or Church employee or volunteer, you *must* report your suspicions.

What resources and assistance does the Church offer to victims of sexual abuse by priests?

All who make a substantiated allegation of abuse against a cleric or other representative of the Church are offered:

- Compassionate care from the Ministry to Survivors of Abuse coordinator.
 - Pastoral and spiritual support from the Church.
 - Counseling assistance with the counselor of their choosing for as long as it is helpful.
- The Church will continue to pay for counseling sessions to support these survivors on their journey of healing.

What does the Archdiocese of Cincinnati do to establish the suitability of a priest assigned for ministry in the archdiocese?

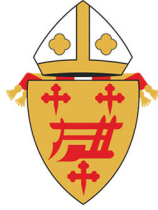
The archdiocese is committed to ensuring that the men who will be ordained to the priesthood are indeed suitable for ministry in the Church and worthy of the trust of the Catholic faithful. Every applicant to the seminary undergoes a full battery of psychological testing prior to acceptance into the seminary program. In addition to spiritual and academic formation during his years in seminary, a man's disposition, behavior, self-awareness, and stability and goodness of character are evaluated. When a man discerns that God might be calling him to the priesthood, the Church has a duty to discern that call as well to make sure that he is truly called and of the right character to serve faithfully and well.

What can the faithful do to support victims of abuse and ensure a safe environment in the Church?

The sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy has had a profound effect on the body of Christ, the people of God. This is not something that we can or should forget, because the terrible reality of what happened has lasting repercussions for victims, their families, the communities involved and our Church as a whole.

As Catholics, we turn to Christ's words and examples to guide us. Christ calls us to:

- **Pray:** Prayer is the foundation of our daily life. Pray for the victims and their families. Pray for our clergy and all who minister in the Church. And pray to the Blessed Mother, asking her to guide the Church and provide comfort and healing to those who were harmed.



Take action: There are many actions that we can take to help comfort victims and combat abuse in the Church and society. For example:

- Educate yourself about child abuse and how to prevent it by completing our archdiocesan VIRTUS training program, Protecting God’s Children.
- Teach your children about personal safety.
- Report any concerns you have about the abuse of a minor to civil authorities. In addition, you can report concerns online (link to Make a Report) or by calling the Ministry for Survivors of Abuse coordinator at 513-263-6623 or 1-800-686-2724, ext. 6623.
- Ask what you can do to assist with safe environment efforts at your parish or school.
- Volunteer at a community agency that is dedicated to victims of violence and sexual abuse.
- Incorporate prayer for victims into existing parish prayer groups or Eucharistic adoration.

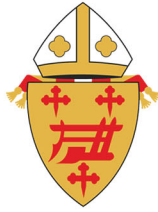
We must continue to support victims, keep them in our prayers and completely commit ourselves to ensuring a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults. We cannot allow ourselves to forget and become complacent — our dedication to these causes must be unwavering and must not cease.

Who are the contacts at the Archdiocese of Cincinnati pertaining to creating a safe environment?

Chancellor – Father Steve Angi
100 E. Eighth St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-421-3131
sangi@catholicaoc.org

Safe environment coordinator – Bill Mitchell
100 E. Eighth St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-421-3131
bmitchell@catholiaoc.org

Human resources director – Rob Reid
100 E. Eighth St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-421-3131
rreid@catholicaoc.org



Are any priests who have been identified as having a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse still serving in a parish, school or diocesan ministry?

No. All of the priests identified on the list have either passed away, returned to the lay state or been prohibited from public ministry as a priest.

What is the definition of “sexual abuse” for the purposes of this list?

“Sexual abuse” is contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor (a person under the age of 18) and an adult, or contact of a sexual nature between an adult and a vulnerable adult. Sexual abuse includes:

- Any act constituting sexual abuse under Ohio law.
- Possessing, viewing, distributing or reproducing child pornography.
- Violating any state or federal law regarding receipt and/or possession of child pornography.

Sexual abuse of a minor is a serious sin against the Sixth Commandment and a grave delict (a serious crime) under the law of the Church.

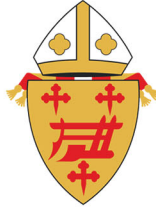
What is the definition of a “vulnerable adult”?

As defined in our Decree on Child Protection, a “vulnerable adult” is any person 18 years of age or older whose ability to physically protect himself or herself from any form of abuse (as defined in the decree) is impaired due to persistent mental, physical, cognitive or developmental disability.

In referencing this list of clerics with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse, what do the terms “laicized,” “permanently removed from ministry” and “substantiated allegation” mean?

Laicized: When a cleric is laicized (permanently dismissed from the clerical state) in accord with canon law at the direction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican, he is no longer incardinated and is unable to function as a priest anywhere.

Permanently removed from ministry: When a cleric is permanently removed from priestly ministry at the direction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican, he is prohibited from wearing clerical clothing and publicly presenting himself as a priest. He is expected to lead a life of prayer and penance, and he is still under the authority of the bishop or archbishop. While prohibited from public ministry, he remains obligated to his priestly promises of prayer and celibacy.



Substantiated allegation: For purposes of this list, a substantiated allegation is one which, based upon investigation and a review of the available facts and circumstances, is more likely than not to be true.

Have the priests on this list been reported to the civil authorities?

Yes. All of the priests on this list have been reported to the civil authorities.

Since the Decree on Child Abuse was first implemented in 1993, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has reported all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor involving Church personnel (bishops, priests, deacons, lay employees and volunteers) to the civil authorities, regardless of when the abuse occurred and regardless of whether the accused person is living or in ministry.

Does the Archdiocese of Cincinnati update this list?

Yes. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati will update the list if or when the archdiocese becomes aware of other reports that meet the criteria for this list.

If a priest who is on this list celebrated a sacrament for me (e.g., baptism, marriage, penance, anointing of the sick), is that sacrament considered valid?

Yes. Sacraments administered by priests on this list are valid, as long as the priest was validly ordained at the time.