

ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

The Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct will be developed through the Safeguarding office in accordance with the instructions of the Holy See, will be revised by the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land to ensure compliance with all laws and regulations and will be subject to periodic review.

INTRODUCTION

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we want to be His witnesses by what we say and what we do. Our conduct should always be in accord with the Faith which we profess, according to the words of Jesus: *Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father* (Mt 5:16).

It is our shared responsibility to welcome all God's children with open hearts and provide a safe environment for them, holding their protection first. We also recognize that the Church has a special responsibility to protect the rights and dignity of all people, especially children and vulnerable people, to whom it devotes a special duty through which the Church and its members commit to taking all necessary precautions to fulfill its mission to safeguard children and the vulnerable and keep them safe from harm.

Recognizing the calling of the Catholic Church for *the effective protection of minors and a commitment to ensure their human and spiritual development, in keeping with the dignity of the human person, [which] are integral parts of the Gospel message that the Church and all members of the faithful are called to spread throughout the world,*¹ We the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land recognize that all human beings have value and dignity for they are made in the image and likeness of God (see: Gen 1:27).

COMMUNITY OF CARE

This recognition encompasses the continuation of our responsibility to respect all people and ensure their protection, for which we are committed. Through the establishment of the Safeguarding Office of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, comes the development of the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct that aim at *establishing and maintaining an ecclesial community that is respectful and mindful of the rights and the needs of minors and vulnerable persons, as well as at being vigilant to the risks of exploitation, sexual abuse and ill-treatment*² in the context of the activities carried out within the sphere of Church-related activities.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

- The Safeguarding Policy aims to promote Safeguarding principles in all Catholic institutions and Congregations to which this document pertains, and to enhance any existing procedures that the Catholic institutions may have, to ensure the effective implementation of Safeguarding standards.
- We intend to establish clear standards of behavior and to provide guidance that will enable all Church personnel to serve efficiently and safely. These standards are to be used as a valuable guideline to aid them in their mission safeguarding both them and those whom they serve as they fulfil their role in conveying God's love. They should help to protect all who are entrusted to the care of the Church.
- By implementing the Safeguarding practices as well as by provision of adequate training and safe recruitment processes, we attribute to the creation of a safe community free of hostility, intimidation,



neglect, exploitation, bullying, harassment, and all forms of abuse whether verbal, sexual or physical as they constitute acts of serious misconduct.

- We want to make every effort to ensure that the Church is a safe and caring environment. We are committed to upholding this safe community where all members can thrive and reach their full potential, live in dignity, and share the collective responsibility for the protection of all individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults.
- We acknowledge that all God's children have the right to be safe, protected from harm and treated with integrity and dignity, and that their protection is at the heart of the Church's mission that particularly emphasizes the importance of protecting the minors and vulnerable adults. This is firmly rooted in the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and has unique value and rights.
- We ensure that anyone aware of a misconduct is obligated to report such matters and after reporting will be supported by the provision of accessible communication channels and clear procedures, where all disclosures are handled in a timely, consistent, and competent manner. We assert that protection is given to the person submitting the report under the protection policy and that all communications are taken seriously, kept confidential, and processed without fear of retaliation.

APPLICATION

This document is to be applied by all Catholic Congregations and Institutions and will serve as the basis for each establishment's custom-made policies. As it provides general guidelines and principles for Church personnel including bishops, religious superiors, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, catechists and lay faithful, *each member of the Church, in accord with his or her proper state, is called to assume responsibility for preventing cases of abuse and to work for justice and for healing.*³

CHAPTER 1 CODE OF CONDUCT

Following the words of Pope Francis: *Our Lord Jesus Christ calls every believer to be a shining example of virtue, integrity, and holiness,*⁴ we are called to give concrete witness of faith in Christ in our life, particularly in our relationship and conduct with others. Our duty of care is guided by the recognition that *the Church loves all her children like a loving mother, but cares for all and protects with a special affection those who are smallest and defenseless,*⁵ rather than by the fear or regulations.

Safeguarding is not a new concept, but rather the continuation of the Church's many efforts and long-provided services, reaffirming its dedication to upholding all people's right to a life of dignity free from harm; it is also the continuation of the duty of care for each person, where everyone has a responsibility to care for and protect the smallest (children) and defenseless (vulnerable individuals) making the Church a safe place for them.

Tend the flock of God in your midst, [overseeing] not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock (1 Pet 5:2-3).

To encourage a change in culture throughout the community, the Church must take the lead, providing people with hope and light, and setting an example for others to follow by establishing effective Safeguarding procedures for the protection and care of children and vulnerable people. *Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil 1:27).*

We aim to accomplish this by establishing guidelines of conduct for Church personnel, so that in their interactions with minors, young people, and vulnerable persons their deliberate actions conform to the good



promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Some of the behavioral norms for all Church personnel who must recognize and adhere to the principles that guide pastoral conduct are listed hereafter:

GENERAL GUIDELINES OF CONDUCT

1. With people whom you serve always conduct professional, healthy and safe interactions that are grounded in compassion. Be vigilant against any harm while treating everyone with respect and dignity.
2. Seek to foster an environment full of respect to all people's right to live in dignity, free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, exploitation, and all forms of abuse and avoid any potential risks of harm to the mental or physical well-being of all people especially children and vulnerable persons.
3. Protect those entrusted to your care and supervision especially minors, youth, adults who are physically and mentally impaired and lack the use of reason or have limited ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence.
4. Communicate with integrity, including accountable and wise use of electronic communication, limiting them to professional work-related platforms. In all public communications or submission to social media Church personnel must conduct in a manner that is in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Avoid private correspondence, except for professional communication of informative character. In case of emergency, when private communication is required inform immediately your supervisor and/or the parents or the guardians of the minor or the vulnerable person. Any conversation about intimate issues should be handled professionally.
5. When it comes to the use and publication of media, it is essential to acquire media consent forms from all individuals. For pastorally related events involving minors, it is required that parental or guardian consent forms be obtained.⁶ Always inform the parents or the guardians about all scheduled activities as well as about the planned transportation.
6. Be visible to others when in the presence of minors. Avoid situations that include being alone with a minor or a vulnerable person, for example in the same room or car. In case when it is unavoidable as part of your role, it is required to inform others about it. Instead plan activities that involve more than one person, or at least other people in sight to minimize potential risks of harm for everyone.
7. The ideal location for one-on-one encounters would be a public space; if that is not feasible or applicable, it is needed to choose a visible location where people may see through a window or open door.
8. The community of the faithful as well as the victims' physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being are all affected by abuse-related offenses. When interacting with children or vulnerable individuals, Church personnel must exhibit caution, sound judgment, and prudence while respecting boundaries and refraining from inappropriate physical or verbal conduct or behavior of a sexual nature. This includes avoiding any forms of physical punishment, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual grooming, or spiritual abuse of any person.
9. Church personnel must not engage in physical, psychological, or sexual harassment of any person, and must not tolerate such harassment or bullying by others.
10. Except in cases of self-defense or where the minor poses a threat to themselves or others, Church personnel are not permitted to use physical force or vulgar, insulting, or abusive language while interacting with minors or vulnerable persons.
11. It is illicit to obtain, participate in, or distribute any pornographic material. Any sexual activity with a minor under the age of 18 is prohibited and regarded as misconduct. Church personnel must also report suspected concerns regarding sexual abuse of minors immediately to local authorities.



12. During the work or any activity connected to the minors or vulnerable persons the Church personnel must refrain from acquiring, consuming, or distributing alcohol or drugs and shall not be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or such medications that could impair decent behavior or sound judgment.
13. Church personnel must refrain from acts of favoritism, preferential treatment, intentionally distinguishing one individual from others as well as unfair discrimination.
14. Maintain professional interactions with other people without deception, intimidation, manipulation, or taking advantage of the personal needs and vulnerabilities of others. Church personnel should not misuse their position's influence, power, or authority to exert excessive or improper leverage, demand benefits, or otherwise abuse their position to exploit others.
15. It is a violation of this code for Church personnel to exchange in any form of exploitation—including but not limited to sexual favors or other types of degrading, demeaning, or exploitative behavior—in return for money, employment, goods, or services. This entails exchanging or threatening to withhold benefits-eligible assistance.
16. All Church personnel are expected to promote stewardship and refrain from financial exploitation⁷ and are required to manage all material and financial resources responsibly.
17. Any economic activity performed by a person under the age of 16 is considered child labor⁸, which is a form of exploitation. Church personnel must not hire any minors. Informal rewarding for volunteering work should always be permitted by the parents.
18. Conflicts of interest should always be avoided, especially when they call into question a person's moral integrity and professional conduct and must be disclosed and reported, e.g., personal, or financial interests.
19. Church personnel must uphold their duty to report any suspected misconduct and should not encourage or facilitate or exaggerate incidents of abuse.

CHAPTER 2 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

These Safeguarding practices should raise awareness about safeguarding issues. We will take all necessary measures to prevent abuse from occurring, protect people—particularly vulnerable persons and minors—from that harm, identify cases of abuse or misconduct, and respond appropriately to reports of abuse if they do occur. To facilitate this, the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land appoints contact persons who receive allegations of misconduct and serve as accessible reporting channels.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AND PROVISION OF SUPPORT:

The response to these allegations includes a wide range of processes, aimed at mending the harm, obtaining justice, and preventing similar incidents from occurring in the future by any means possible and most importantly to assist the healing of survivors, in the recognition that *justice and prevention are complementary*.⁹ Thus the approach should be survivor-centered, with victims receiving assistance and care as needed.

- *Those who affirm that they have suffered exploitation, sexual abuse, or ill-treatment in an ecclesial context, as well as their families, have the right to be welcomed, listened to and supported¹⁰ and are to be treated with dignity and respect.*
- The offended persons shall be offered medical and social assistance, including emergency, therapeutic and psychological assistance, as well as useful information of a legal nature as required by the specific case and will also be offered spiritual support and assistance.



- An obligation to keep silent may not be imposed on any person with regard to the contents of his or her report.¹¹

PROVISION OF SUPPORT TO THE ACCUSED PERSON:

Maintaining confidentiality and protecting the privacy of personal information is essential to protect both the parties involved. It is also necessary to safeguard the good name of the accused person, who will be promptly informed of the accusations so that he/she can respond to them, unless there are compelling reasons not to. The accused will be encouraged to seek the assistance of civil and canonical advisers and will also be accompanied with offered psychological and spiritual support.¹²

The right to fair and impartial complaint handling process, in compliance with the presumption of innocence and the principles of legality and proportionality between the committed offence and the disciplinary action taken is guaranteed to the accused. While precautionary measures, including release from duties or otherwise limiting the accused's contact with minors or vulnerable people, may be taken whilst accusation is investigated.

The Church's response is one of active compassion¹³ and seeks to provide opportunities for conversion and reconciliation; it also includes possible forms of support. However, in some circumstances, disciplinary measures intended to address the issues may be required for the benefit of the people involved as well as the Church.

REPORTING MECHANISMS

Along with our duty of care comes our duty to report, where anyone who knows or has reasonable grounds to believe that a minor or vulnerable person has suffered abuse in any form, has a duty to report it without delay. Every report needs to be filed.

Church personnel must uphold their responsibility to report any suspected concerns of misconduct, whether witnessed or heard, and shall inform promptly the appointed contact persons or the local Ordinary or the Major Superior competent for the adoption of the measures provided for by canon law in accordance with Church reporting procedures¹⁴. They must also report to local authorities if the case necessitates (in some places, due to the local customs the good of the victim and the accused person needs to be taken in consideration before reporting civil authorities). The obligation is to report any observed or suspected misconduct immediately and not investigate unless designated to do so.

Church personnel should encourage minors, young people and vulnerable adults to voice their concerns and ensure they are informed of the available reporting channels and protected by the protection policy.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING REPORTS OF ALLEGED ABUSE:

- After receiving the *notitia de delicto*¹⁵, the main priority is providing the victim with the needed support or referral: The complaint receiver will promptly make the necessary referrals for the required services (medical, psychological, legal, etc.) as appropriate and fitting to the complaint.
- The receiver of the complaint should file a report within 24 hours to the designated authority that is as detailed as possible, containing all relevant information contained in the *notitia de delicto* regarding the time, date, location of the incident, details of the persons involved and informed as well as description of the incident to accurately evaluate the facts.



- After gathering information pertaining to the incident, the next step includes assessing the credibility of the claim. In some cases, additional information must be collected to determine whether a claim is credible. Once the complaint is confirmed to be credible, the designated authority will appoint an official to investigate the matter professionally and confidentially. Precautionary measures will be taken, in accordance with the rules established by the Safeguarding Advisory Board.
- The appointed investigator conducts the necessary investigations and upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will share the findings and recommendations which will be taken into consideration when the designated authority will decide on the final appropriate and proportionate action to be taken.

Anonymous complaints

- Anonymous complaints will be handled cautiously and appropriately addressed to determine if there is enough information to clarify the issues, substantiate the claims, and properly investigate the allegations. One need to be aware that disclosure may be challenging in some situations, or the reporter wants to keep their identity unknown.¹⁶

Malicious Complaints:

- Church personnel are to refrain from knowingly submitting any dishonest, false, misleading, deceptive, or defamatory allegations of misconduct.
- In case the investigation finds that the accusation was made deliberately, falsely and with the intent to cause harm the report will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offence, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken up to and including dismissal from service.
- If the identity of the person against whom a malicious charge has been charged was publicly known, all necessary steps will be taken to restore their reputation.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFE KEEPING OF RECORDS:

- Confidentiality while obtaining or sharing records is extremely essential, where the private information of all parties involved will be protected to the greatest degree possible.
- While information received during sacramental confession should not be recorded or disclosed¹⁷. In strict accordance with professional ethical guidelines, any information obtained by Church personnel during pastoral counseling, teaching, or spiritual guidance and provision of other services is to be treated with the utmost confidentiality. When there is a compelling reason, e.g., clear, and imminent risk to the individual or to others, or when it is mandated by law, Church personnel may only release the information necessary to protect the parties concerned and prevent harm. If it is possible, Church personnel must inform the relevant individual about the disclosure before it is made.
- All records are kept in a safe place and processed in a strictly confidential manner where only members who have been authorized with access to the records and are responsible for overseeing their use may handle them.



KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Minor: Any person under the age of eighteen, or who is considered by law to be the equivalent of a minor (child); The words “child” and “minor” are used interchangeably to mean anyone below the age of 18 years and those who are equivalent to them by law (Can. 97: “§1. A person who has completed the eighteenth year of age has reached the majority; below this age, a person is a minor. §2. A minor before the completion of the seventh year is called an infant and is considered not responsible for oneself (*non sui compos*). With the completion of the seventh year, however, a minor is presumed to have the use of reason”. Can. 98: “§1. A person who has reached the majority has the full exercise of his or her rights. §2. A minor, in the exercise of his or her rights, remains subject to the authority of parents or guardians except in those matters in which minors are exempted from their authority by divine law or canon law. In what pertains to the appointment of guardians and their authority, the prescripts of civil law are to be observed unless canon law provides otherwise or unless in certain cases the diocesan bishop, for a just cause, has decided to provide for the matter through the appointment of another guardian”. Can. 99: “Whoever habitually lacks the use of reason is considered not responsible for oneself (*non sui compos*) and is equated with infants”).

Noting that the concept of “minor” in these cases has varied over the course of time, the age was universally raised to 18 years, and this is the age currently in effect¹⁸.

Vulnerable Person: Any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence;¹⁹ For the purposes of this document, a «vulnerable person» is to be considered equivalent to a «minor».

Church personnel include, but are not limited to, those who represent the Church, the bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, clerics, religious, communion ministers, members of consecrated life, non-ordained religious, catechists, lay employees and lay volunteers involved in Church and parish work, vicariates, congregations, and Catholic institutions.

Delicts: The following constitutes the delict: *1. The delict in question includes every external offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor (...)* *2. The typology of the delict is quite broad; it can include, for example, sexual relations (consensual or non-consensual), physical contact for sexual gratification, exhibitionism, masturbation, the production of pornography, inducement to prostitution, conversations and/or propositions of a sexual nature, which can also occur through various means of communication.*²⁰

Sexual Exploitation: Any actual abuse or attempt to use a position of vulnerability, strength, or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to benefiting from monetary, social or political profits from the sexual exploitation of another person.

Financial exploitation and material abuse includes, but is not limited to, theft of money or possessions, fraud, scamming, denying assistance or seeking favors in exchange, misuse of benefits or direct payments.

Harassment can be in the form of a single incident, or a reoccurring behavior intended to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment. It includes physical, verbal, visual, and sexual behavior. e.g., use of offensive words, jokes, or threats, inappropriate physical contact, or assault, insults, or unwelcomed banter (teasing, mocking), or inappropriate electronic communications.

Bullying is a form of harassment that occurs often over time and is regarded as misconduct.



MODULE FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ADHERENCE

Each of us must behave with respect and care in order to fulfill our obligations. Without compromising the rights and obligations established in each location by state laws, particularly those concerning any reporting obligations to the competent civil authority, this Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct will aid in this effort by laying out uniform norms that apply to Church personnel in various pastoral contexts, including providing or supporting pastoral care to the Christian faithful and others.

Partakers are accountable for adhering to them. Depending on the nature and facts of the violation, as well as the extent of the harm caused, those who breach them may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from service.

Example:

I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE HAVING READ THIS DOCUMENT AND SHALL COMMIT AND ADHERE TO THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Position and Location of Service _____

Name of Institution or Congregation: _____

Date and location _____



REFERENCES:

- ¹ *Chirograph for the Institution of a Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors*, Pope Francis, 21 April 2015.
- ² *Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons*, Vicariate of Vatican City, 26 March 2019.
- ³ *Address to the Members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors*, Pope Francis, 29 April 2022.
- ⁴ *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, Pope Francis, 7 May 2019.
- ⁵ *As a Loving Mother*, Pope Francis, 4 June 2016.
- ⁶ *Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons*, Vicariate of Vatican City, 26 March 2019: "It is indispensable to obtain the written consent of the parents or guardians for the participation of minors in pastoral activities. The parents and guardians shall be informed of the proposed activities, as well as of the names and contact information of the persons responsible. The written consent of parents or guardians is required for photographing or filming minors, for publishing any photographs or videos that portray them, as well as for making direct contact with minors, even by telephone or through social networks. The documents of consent containing sensitive personal data shall be kept on record carefully and diligently."
- ⁷ See Annex 1.
- ⁸ In case the local law allows it, the minors starting from age 14 can be hired during their vacation for light jobs only. From the age of 16 it is allowed to hire the minors during the school year, but not during the school hours. Always confront the local civil law regarding the hiring of the minors.
- ⁹ *Address to the Members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors*, Pope Francis, 29 April 2022.
- ¹⁰ *Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons*, Vicariate of Vatican City, 26 March 2019.
- ¹¹ *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, Pope Francis, 7 May 2019.
- ¹² *Vademecum on Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed by Clerics*, Ver. 2.0., Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5 June 2022: "The ecclesiastical authorities must ensure that the alleged victim and his or her family are treated with dignity and respect, and must offer them welcome, attentive hearing and support, also through dedicated services, as well as spiritual, medical and psychological help, as required by the specific case (...) The same can be done with regard to the accused. One should, however, avoid giving the impression of wishing to anticipate the results of the process." See also: *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, Pope Francis, 7 May 2019, Art. 5.
- ¹³ The response recommended in such situations is one of "active compassion. Pope John Paul II wrote: "The Bishop should accompany with prayer and active compassion any priests who, for whatever reason, has fallen away from his vocation or his fidelity to the call of the Lord and who is, therefore, failing to live up to his duties" (*Pastores Gregis*, John Paul II, 16 October 2003, n.47). Card. Levada added: "The bishop must also attempt to draw him back to the Lord, through a process of necessary conversion of life, according to the circumstances." (*Considerations on the Delicta Graviora*, Cardinal William Levada, 23 November 2011).
- ¹⁴ Whenever a cleric or a member of an Institute of Consecrated Life or of a Society of Apostolic Life has notice of, or well-founded motives to believe that a misconduct has been committed, that person is obliged to report promptly the fact to the local Ordinary where the events are said to have occurred or to another Ordinary among those referred to in canons 134 CIC and 984 CCEO. Exceptions are mentioned by canons 1229 §2 CCEO and 1548 §2 CIC: "The following are exempted from the obligation to respond: 1/ clerics regarding what has been made known to them by reason of sacred ministry; civil officials, physicians, midwives, advocates, notaries, and others bound by professional secrecy even by reason of having given advice, regarding those matters subject to this secrecy; 2/ those who fear that from their own testimony ill repute, dangerous hardships, or other grave evils will befall them, their spouses, or persons related to them by consanguinity or affinity."
- ¹⁵ "A *notitia de delicto*, occasionally called a *notitia criminis*, consists of any information about a possible delict that in any way comes to the attention of the Ordinary or Hierarch. It need not be a formal complaint. This *notitia* can come from a variety of sources: it can be formally presented to the Ordinary or Hierarch, orally or in writing, by the alleged victim, his or her guardians or other persons claiming to have knowledge about the matter; it can become known to the Ordinary or Hierarch through the exercise of his duty for vigilance; it can be reported to the Ordinary or Hierarch by the civil authorities through channels provided for by local legislation; it can be made known through the communications media (including social media); it can come to his knowledge through hearsay, or in any other adequate way. At times, a *notitia de delicto* can derive from an anonymous source, namely, from unidentified or unidentifiable persons. The anonymity of the source should not automatically lead to considering the report as false, especially when it is accompanied by documentation that attests to the likelihood of a delict. Nonetheless, for easily understandable reasons, great caution should be exercised in considering this type of *notitia*, and anonymous reports certainly should not be encouraged" (*Vademecum on Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed by Clerics*, Ver. 2.0., Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5 June 2022).
- ¹⁶ "At times, a *notitia de delicto* can derive from an anonymous source, namely, from unidentified or unidentifiable persons. The anonymity of the source should not automatically lead to considering the report as false, especially when it is accompanied by documentation that attests to the likelihood of a delict. Nonetheless, for easily understandable reasons, great caution should be exercised in considering this type of *notitia*, and anonymous reports certainly should not be encouraged" (*Vademecum on Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed by Clerics*, Ver. 2.0., Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5 June 2022).
- ¹⁷ Can. 983 §1 CIC: "The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason."

¹⁸ *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*, John Paul II, April 30, 2001.

¹⁹ *Law No. CCXCVII on the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons*, Pope Francis, 26 March 2019.

²⁰ *Vademecum on Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed by Clerics*, Ver. 2.0., Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5 June 2022.