

A Guide for Reporting Abuse

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood recognize that sexual misconduct by a Missionary has devastating consequences for victims and their families, for the lay and religious communities, and for the perpetrators. We have become increasingly aware of the effects of this tragic behavior and have developed a steadfast commitment to helping those affected.

This Guide is intended to provide basic information on (1) how the Province defines sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships, (2) what its procedures are for responding to complaints of sexually inappropriate behavior, and (3) to whom those subjected to sexual misconduct can turn for help.

Sexual Misconduct in a Ministerial Relationship

A Ministerial Relationship is one in which a person receives pastoral care from priests, brothers, sisters, spiritual directors and pastoral counselors, among other church workers.

Sexual Misconduct is a general term that includes sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse.

Sexual Harassment is unwanted sexualized conduct or language between co-workers in a church setting. It may include, but is not limited to 1) unsolicited sexual advances and propositions, 2) the use of sexually degrading words to describe an individual or his/her body, 3) the telling of inappropriate or sexually-charged jokes, 4) retaliation against a co-worker who refuses sexual advances, 5) offers of preferential treatment such as promotions, positive performance evaluations, or favorably assigned duties or shifts in exchange for sexual favors.

Sexual Exploitation consists of sexual contact between a missionary and person receiving pastoral care from him.

Sexual Abuse is sexual contact between a Missionary and a minor.

Sexual exploitation or sexual abuse can include physical contact or actions such as:

Sexual touch or other physical contact that makes the person being touched feel uncomfortable, such as:

- Giving a sexually charged gift (such as lingerie)

- A prolonged hug when a brief hug is customary behavior
- Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate
- Showing sexually suggestive objects or pornography
- Sexual intercourse, anal, or oral sex

Sexual exploitation or sexual abuse can also include verbal behavior such as:

- Innuendo or sexual talk
- Suggestive comments
- Descriptions of sexual experiences, fantasies
- Sexual propositions.

Sexual misconduct—whether harassment, exploitation, or abuse by a Missionary, employee, or volunteer—is contrary to Catholic morals, doctrine and Canon Law. It is never acceptable in a pastoral relationship with a parishioner, employee, spiritual directee, counseling client, or anyone who has sought the Church’s ministry.

It is not uncommon for those who seek the Church’s ministry to feel attracted to a religious or to be flattered by his attention. A layperson’s attraction to a Missionary or enjoyment in being the object of his sexual interest does not excuse any form of sexual misconduct on his part, however. It is entirely the responsibility of the Missionary to maintain appropriate emotional and sexual boundaries with those with whom he works and/or serves.

How the Missionaries Respond to Complaints of Sexual Misconduct

The Province responds to all allegations of sexual misconduct with great care. To ensure that we handle each instance promptly, thoroughly, and compassionately, the Province has a Victim’s Assistance Coordinator, who will listen to, understand, and offer help, including appropriate psychological counseling for those affected by missionary misconduct.

The Province, through the Victim’s Assistance Coordinator and independent investigators will respond swiftly to evaluate and investigate any accusation of sexual misconduct by a Missionary. Any Missionaries who have engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor will be removed from ministry and participate in a safety plan which offers appropriate psychological treatment specific for offenders, and entails ongoing monitoring and supervision for the rest of their lives in the Congregation. The Province, consistent with the directives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, has established a Review Board.

This interdisciplinary board of lay professionals advises the Congregation on all matters related to sexual misconduct.

Preventing Sexual Misconduct

In addition to establishing procedures for responding to sexual misconduct, the Province has undertaken a series of measures to prevent future incidents of abuse. These include extensive mandatory psychological evaluation of our candidates before they enter formation and the provision of continuing education programs for Missionaries about issues of sexuality and personal conduct.

Conclusion

It is our firm belief that our Missionaries must maintain appropriate boundaries with laypersons in order to preserve the integrity of the ministerial relationship. Moreover, we call upon those with knowledge of a Missionaries' inappropriate behavior—whether past or present—to come forward with this information so that innocent victims may be spared from further harm. In short, we ask everyone to join with us in protecting the safety of children, women and men, and with firm determination, to promote healing where there is pain.

Where to Turn for Help

If you or someone you know believes that a Missionary has violated the boundaries outlined here, we urge you to report such behavior immediately to the Provincial Director. Your case will be handled with the strictest sensitivity and confidentiality.

Contact information for the Missionaries:

The V. Rev. Jeffrey Kirch, C.P.P.S.
431 East Second St.
Dayton, OH 45402
(937) 228-9263

The Commitment of the Missionaries

We Missionaries are concerned for any victims who may have suffered abuse by a Member of the Congregation and for the families of those victims. We will offer pastoral and spiritual support to them, as well as professional counseling if requested. Our hope and prayer is to bring some healing and peace to anyone who has suffered such abuse.

We Missionaries have dedicated ourselves to preventing sexual abuse. By establishing boundaries for healthy ministry with minors and by maintaining a constructive fraternal vigilance, we seek to provide a safe environment for all people. These efforts

are supported by education and training, both during initial as well as on-going formation.

We Missionaries pledge our active cooperation and compliance with civil authorities. All allegations of child sexual abuse will be reported immediately to appropriate agents of the government.