

A
Statement
of Episcopal
Commitment

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We bishops pledge again to respond to the demands of the *Charter* in a way that manifests our accountability to God, to God's people, and to one another. Individually and together, we acknowledge mistakes in the past when some bishops transferred, from one assignment to another, priests who abused minors. We recognize our roles in the suffering this has caused, and we continue to ask forgiveness for it.

Without at all diminishing the importance of broader accountability, this statement focuses on the accountability which flows from our episcopal communion and fraternal solidarity, a moral responsibility we have with and for each other.

While bishops are ordained primarily for their diocese or eparchy, we are called as well to protect the unity and to promote the common discipline of the whole Church (CIC, c. 392; CCEO, c. 201). Participating in the college of bishops, we are responsible to act in a manner that reflects both effective and affective collegiality.

Respecting the legitimate rights of bishops who are directly accountable to the Holy See, in a spirit of collegiality and fraternity we renew our commitment to the following:

1. Within each of our provinces, we will assist each other to interpret correctly and implement, within our respective jurisdictions, the

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, always respecting Church law and striving to reflect the Gospel.

2. In cases of an allegation of sexual abuse of minors by bishops, we will apply the requirements of the *Charter* also to ourselves, respecting always Church law as it applies to bishops. In such cases, we will inform the Apostolic Nuncio.

3. In cases of financial demands for settlements involving allegations of any sexual misconduct by bishops, we will inform the Apostolic Nuncio.

4. Within each of our provinces, as an expression of collegiality, including fraternal support, fraternal challenge and fraternal correction, we will engage in ongoing mutual reflection upon our commitment to holiness of life and upon the exercise of our episcopal ministry.

In making this statement, we firmly uphold the dignity of every human being and renew our commitment to live and promote the chastity required of all followers of Christ and especially of deacons, priests and bishops.

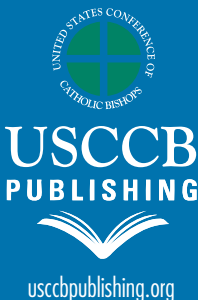
After five years, this Statement of Episcopal Commitment will be reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Bishops' Life and Ministry.

Let there be no doubt

or confusion on anyone's part:

For us, your bishops, our obligation to
protect children and young people and
to prevent sexual abuse flows
from the mission and example
given to us by Jesus Christ himself,
in whose name we serve.

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Publication No. 5-721
USCCB Publishing
Washington, D.C.
ISBN-10: 1-57455-721-1
ISBN-13: 978-1-57455-721-3

