

Protect and heal

Principles, policies and norms for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults in the institutions of the Legion of Christ and to promote healing and reconciliation with the victims/survivors of sexual abuse committed by members of the Legion of Christ

February 26, 2020

[a translation from the official Spanish version]



LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

DG-LC 1180-2020
Clas. I.3.47
Decree

DECREE PROMULGATING
THE DOCUMENT PROTECT AND HEAL
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

- Considering the norms of the Code of Canon Law and specific documents on the abuse of minors issued by the Holy See;
- Considering the Legionaries of Christ's Safe Environment Accreditation Standards
- Considering that the 2020 General Chapter has approved principles, policies and norms for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults in the institutions of the Legionaries of Christ and to promote healing and reconciliation with the victims of sexual abuse committed by members of the Legionaries of Christ

I PROMULGATE

the document Protect and Heal with universal validity for the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ and its institutions.

These principles, guidelines and policies will govern the decisions that are made from the date of promulgation of this decree onward.

The new regulatory measures become mandatory as of June 1, 2020.

It is the responsibility of the competent major superiors to institute the planned new structures, to promulgate the decrees of implementation and application and to make the corresponding appointments, within a prudential period of one year from the date of publication.

Given in Rome, February 26, 2020

Father John Connor, LC
General Director

Father Andreas Schöggel, LC
General Secretary

Introduction

1. In recent years, the Church and society have been acquiring a new awareness of the very high responsibility to protect children and adolescents, based on the principle of “putting the interests of children first,” which should govern the actions that are aimed at this portion of the People of God and society. The evil and profound effects of all kinds of sexual abuse, and the deep personal and social wounds it causes are also understood better today, leading to important steps to listen to, understand, support and welcome the victims who have suffered such abuse.

In this context and in light of the [1941-2019 Report](#) on the sexual abuse of minors by some Legionaries of Christ, the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, on the occasion of its General Chapter held in January and February 2020, did a conscience exam and, after careful reflection, confirmed and established principles, policies and norms for the protection of children, adolescents and adults.¹ We also commit ourselves to the search for truth and pathways of reparation, healing and justice for those who have suffered abuse by members of the Legion of Christ, with our eyes set on the desired pastoral goal of reconciliation.

We also reaffirm our resolve to continue to develop and offer effective tools and a rapid response to any information, communication, news or claim of inappropriate behavior that transgresses the applicable laws or codes of conduct, so as to reinforce the establishment of safe environments where the Legion of Christ is entrusted with the educational and pastoral care of children, adolescents, young people and vulnerable adults.

All this in observance and application of the universal and particular ecclesiastical laws, as well as the civil legislation of each place.

2. In this way, the Legion of Christ and each of its members are determined to continue our journey of conversion and our pastoral service to the Church and to each person, proceeding responsibly as authentic shepherds after the example of the Lord, renewing our effort to live virtuously and evangelically.

¹ The first version of the Territorial Safe Environment Accreditation Standards was promulgated December 30, 2014.

We make our own Pope Francis' message in his 2019 Apostolic Letter, *Vos estis lux mundi*:

The crimes of sexual abuse offend Our Lord, cause physical, psychological and spiritual damage to the victims and harm the community of the faithful. In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church, so that personal sanctity and moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church's mission².

POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter *Vos estis lux mundi*, issued Motu Proprio, May 7, 2019.

Part 1

Principles and Policies

A. To promote healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors of sexual abuse committed by members of the Legion of Christ

3. The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ is committed to welcoming, listening to, helping and providing healing for the victims, families and communities affected by the sexual abuse committed by some of its members or in its institutions, and to offering just and due reparation.

4. The Legion of Christ or its institutions shall have standing committees or bodies that serve to listen to victims, receive them, and reach out to them, as well as to receive accusations or claims against members of the Legion of Christ or employees of its institutions who have committed sexual abuse and to provide the appropriate follow-up. The Legion will also make it easier for people to submit their accusations to bodies independent of the Legion of Christ, if they so desire, where they can be in an environment where they feel safe. In all cases, the jurisdiction and functions of civil or ecclesiastical bodies which, country by country, have an official mandate to receive and deal with complaints of abuse shall be respected.

5. The Legionaries of Christ are committed to promoting outreach initiatives (such as, for example, the so-called “restorative justice” processes³ that are being successfully developed in some places), guided by independent experts. These initiatives seek to facilitate restorative encounters, the healing of wounds, a listening to victims which is both constructive and healing, and the restoration of peace and justice in the areas where crimes, abuses, boundary violations or other transgressions of the Code of Conduct have been committed, whatever their gravity.

6. In considering the impact and consequences of the abuse suffered, the appropriate bodies of the Congregation are prepared to pay for necessary therapy and to agree on other forms of assistance, according to parameters and channels duly defined for each country.

7. The Legion of Christ will continue the effort of investigating and clari-

³ See Glossary.

ifying cases of abuse from its past, in order to reach out to those affected and restore justice, as far as possible. Where merited, the competent superior shall open the relevant canonical judicial processes or shall submit the allegations to the competent civil authority.

8. The appropriate authorities of the Legion of Christ will conduct a complete documentary review of each case of substantiated accusations of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults to verify if the cases were properly addressed. If there is sufficient evidence of a crime of concealment or grave negligence, the major superior shall proceed in accordance with Canon Law or shall refer the case to the appropriate authority.

9. Every major superior and every safe environment coordinator in the institutions of the Legion of Christ will receive specific training in the pastoral care of victims of sexual abuse and their families. Each territory of the Legion of Christ must also have people trained in the pastoral care of those who have suffered sexual abuse and their families.

10. With the help of institutions specialized in the subject of abuse, Legionaries will be encouraged to participate in certificate courses or other similar initiatives to update their knowledge in the understanding and prevention of abuse, as well as in the pastoral care of the victims of the different kinds of abuse.

11. The institutions or the appropriate authorities of the Legion of Christ will not impose confidentiality clauses in the agreements they establish with persons who have been abused by one of their members or employees. Exceptions will be granted only at the express written request of the victim. (Rescript and Instruction of the Secretariat of State, December 6, 2019, 5)

B. For the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, and for the creation of safe environments

12. The Legion of Christ has codes of conduct and safe environment standards (which may be established generally, by country, by type of institution or by type of activity) that must be observed as mandatory by all members and persons who offer services, work in its institutions or collaborate in its activities (e.g. teachers, employees, volunteers, etc.) (see [code of conduct](#)).

- a. These Standards shall be constantly updated, in accordance with the development of best practices and each country's civil legislation in this field.
- b. Regular training sessions will be promoted so that the Standards and Codes of Conduct are effectively known and complied with by all.

c. The Code of Conduct shall include sanctions to be imposed on those who do not comply with it.

13. To ensure a culture of care for children, major superiors must ensure that trained staff and resources are available everywhere to meet safe environment standards.

14. As part of its admission processes, the Legion of Christ is committed to carefully evaluating, with the help of specialists, the background of candidates who wish to enter the Congregation and, subsequently, to follow strict criteria for admission to the various stages of religious life. The purpose of this is to preventively detect the unsuitability of those who might in the future put minors or vulnerable adults at risk and to prevent them from continuing on the path to the priesthood.

15. The competent superior must carefully review the file and record of each religious before assigning him to serve in an institution of the Legion of Christ, in order to ascertain his suitability for work with minors or vulnerable adults.

16. The institutions related to the Legion of Christ shall apply similar criteria to those mentioned in the two previous numbers when hiring employees or enlisting volunteers.

C. To ensure a rapid, effective and pastorally timely response to allegations or accusations of sexual abuse

17. Each territory, or each institution related to the Legion of Christ, must have a rapid and comprehensive response plan to address any allegations or accusations against Legionaries, employees or volunteers working in their institutions. These allegations or accusations will be dealt with by a team that listens to all those involved, observing the provisions of civil and canon law, in order to protect the rights of all.

18. The institutions and entities of the Legion of Christ confirm their obligation and decision to comply promptly and responsibly with civil and canon law. Without prejudice to the sacramental forum, they commit to report the probable commission of crimes to civil authorities and to cooperate with them.

19. In addition, in each situation, the victim will be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the civil authorities.

20. For each territory or country, the Legion of Christ will establish a review board, made up of a majority of external specialists, to give advice as to response and follow-up to be given to complaints, accusations or allegations, on a case-by-case basis. This review board will also have

the function of evaluating the processes and decisions taken by the authorities to ensure the application of established standards and best practices. Its powers must be defined in the Standards and relevant regulations. The review board may be replaced by equivalent state or Church bodies.

21. In favor of excellence and transparency, the institutions of the Legion of Christ are committed to seeking certification of the application of safe environment standards and codes of conduct, preferably by an independent external body.

D. To ensure justice and the rights of all

22. Particular care must always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and those of the person against whom the charges have been brought.

23. In addition to observing state law, the Legion of Christ, as a clerical religious institute of pontifical right, will constitute an ecclesiastical tribunal, in accordance with Canon Law (see Canons 1427 and 1438, 3). This tribunal will hear cases and disputes concerning religious who, due to their nature or by directive of the Holy See, must be judged in the canonical sphere by the major superiors of the Legion of Christ.

24. In accordance with canon and civil law, any Legionary accused of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty or as determined by the competent judicial authority. All possible measures shall be taken to protect the reputation of the accused during the course of the investigation and the judicial process, if any.⁴

25. The accused Legionary, if he so wishes, may have access to legal counsel, both civil and canonical.

26. If an accusation is proved to be unfounded, or if the cleric or religious is judged innocent, and the case is public knowledge, then the appropriate and possible measures will be taken to restore his good name.

⁴ See Pope Francis, *Vos estis lux mundi*, art. 12 §7; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Circular letter to assist episcopal conferences in developing guidelines for dealing with cases of sexual abuses of minors perpetrated by clerics*, 3 May 2011, I, d, 2-3).

E. In order to promote the necessary communication and foster appropriate transparency

27. The appropriate bodies of the Legion of Christ will inform its members and the general public of proven cases of sexual abuse committed by any of its members within the limits imposed by civil law and, as the case may be and the circumstances require, with due respect for the good name of the persons involved. At the local level, special attention will be given to persons, communities or institutions directly affected by cases of sexual abuse.

28. The Legion of Christ will regularly update, on a general and territorial level, the published reports on the abuses perpetrated by any of its members, observing the applicable civil laws, specifically the laws and norms on the privacy of information.

29. The Legion of Christ adopts the following guidelines for the public communication of cases of sexual abuse by members of the Legion of Christ:

- a. In principle, it is considered legitimate (and in this light we interpret canon 220 of the Code of Canon Law) and necessary for the protection of children and the common good, that the major superior authorize the publication of the name of Legionary priests who have been convicted, either canonically or civilly, of abusing a minor, unless the applicable civil law prohibits such publication (e.g., laws or norms on data privacy);
- b. It may also be legitimate for the major superior to authorize the publication, including the name, in the case of Legionaries, former Legionaries or deceased persons, whose moral certainty is comparable to the certainty of a canonical or civil conviction, who have abused minors, even if they have not been tried civilly or canonically, when there is a responsibility to protect society, to do justice or to fulfil a duty of reparation to the victims, unless civil law forbids such publication;
- c. It may also be lawful to authorize the publication of a name to clarify, confirm or deny rumors of allegedly criminal acts;
- d. During the preliminary investigation, in order to maintain the presumption of innocence and to protect the right to a good reputation, in principle, the name of the accused will not be published beyond the requirements of the investigation itself, unless current ecclesial practice or the norms of the episcopal conferences establish it as a mandatory measure.

F. To offer more general support to the Church and society

30. As far as possible, the Legion of Christ will promote interdisciplinary centers for the study of the phenomenon and prevention of sexual abuse, relying on its university institutions, or on public institutions specialized in children's rights, human rights, and so forth.

31. The Legion of Christ will also encourage, as far as possible, the establishment of interdisciplinary teams at the service of the family, society and the Church, composed of specialists in the various branches (psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, lawyers, educators, and the like), dedicated to the care of victims of sexual abuse and open to receive those affected by these crimes.

Part 2

Substantive and procedural norms

Standards, safe environments and codes of conduct

32. Every territory of the Legion of Christ must have a trained safe environment coordinator. This should also be the case for each educational institution and other institutions serving minors or vulnerable adults. The duties of the coordinator are defined in the Safe Environment Standards, the Code of Conduct and the corresponding instructions.

33. The Standards and Codes of Conduct should be updated regularly to take account of legislative changes and best practices, as needed.

34. Each novice and each member of the Legion of Christ is obliged to comply with the Code of Conduct in force in the nation in which he carries out his apostolate or institutional activity. Assent to this Code is a necessary precondition for him to exercise priestly ministry or, if he is a novice or religious in formation, any apostolic activity. Anyone who fails to comply with this Code must be sanctioned as set out in the Code of Conduct itself.

35. Superiors, directors of institutions and directors of any apostolic activity, in collaboration with the safe environment coordinator, must ensure compliance with the Safe Environment Standards and the Code of Conduct in their communities and institutions. They must be warned, sanctioned or removed from office in the event of habitual omission or negligence in complying with this norm.

Preliminary investigation

36. Whenever there is information⁵ of a possible crime of sexual abuse or other forms of child abuse presumably constituting a crime against a minor by a Legionary that seems credible, the major superior, as part of the rapid response procedures, in addition to referring it to the civil authorities in a timely manner, has the obligation to initiate quickly and carefully an investigation of his own, if civil law allows it. It can be done personally or by a delegate and concerns the facts, circumstances and imputability of the accused (see Canon 1717, § 1). At the same time, the ecclesiastical authorities will be notified, as established.

37. Canonical investigations must be coordinated with civic judicial processes in such a way as not to interfere with them.

38. Any person who brings forward an allegation will be treated with

⁵ Information should be understood as any formal testimony or allegation, as well as a written statement. If not submitted formally, then anything that leads to the suspicion that a crime has been committed may also be considered information.

due respect, employing the pertinent formalities and with the confidentiality required by the case.

39. When a Legionary witnesses, finds out about or has good reason to believe that a crime has been committed against a minor, in addition to complying with civil law, he has the obligation to remit the information or allegation to the safe environment coordinator or the territorial director without delay and preferably in writing, and if he considers it necessary, to inform the general director, always respecting the sacramental seal.

40. During the preliminary canonical investigation, the accused will be informed in writing what he is accused of. Once the preliminary investigation has been completed, he will be informed, also in writing, of the results.

41. From the beginning of the investigation, the territorial director may, as a precautionary measure, at any time restrict an accused priest's exercise of sacred ministry, or of an office or position in any institution of the Legion, while waiting for the accusations to be clarified. In any case, the defendant shall not participate in any pastoral activities with minors or any activities involving overnight stays outside the community, nor shall he have any responsibility in the safe environment field. These measures are intended to prevent others from being put at risk or for there being occasion for further scandal. However, it must be clear to both the cleric and the community that these measures are a preventive and temporary measure, and that at no time should they be considered a judgment that violates the presumption of innocence of the person under investigation.

42. The preliminary canonical investigation must be conducted in a professional manner and be concluded within a maximum of 90 days from the date the major superior received the accusation or information of the possible crime.⁶

43. While the final discernment of what constitutes notice of a crime rests with the major superior, the failure to begin or complete the preliminary investigation and to apply appropriate precautionary measures in order to protect others could constitute the crime of negligence contained in Canon 1389 §2 of the Code of Canon Law⁷

44. When the investigator has gathered the necessary elements, he must submit his opinion to the major superior, who must decide the veracity, imputability and steps to be taken, in accordance with canon 1718.

6 See POPE FRANCIS, *Vos estis lux mundi*, 7 May 2019, art. 14 §1.

7 "A person who, through culpable negligence, unlawfully and with harm to another, performs or omits an act of ecclesiastical power or ministry or office, is to be punished with a just penalty." (Canon 1389 §2).

45. If there is sufficient evidence that a crime of sexual abuse has been committed and that a canonical procedure is to be initiated (see Canon 1718 and substantial norms for the delicta graviora of the CDF), the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to be notified. In this case the abovementioned precautionary measures are to be confirmed or imposed (see Canon 1722), which must always include the separation of the accused from the public exercise of sacred ministry.

Archives

46. All information about allegations of abuse (i.e., the initial or formal allegation, the canonical investigation, the verdict and canonical restrictions, the safety plan) and also formal corrections and canonical warnings about risky behavior are to be filed in the priest's or religious' personal file. The major superiors will have access to this information in case of other accusations or allegations in order to fully assess the situation of the accused.

Measures and sanctions

47. For any priest who is found guilty canonically of multiple or repeated sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable persons, the recommendation of the general director to the Holy See shall ordinarily be expulsion from the clerical state. In these cases, if the age of the priest, his health or other serious circumstances make it advisable, the general director will ask the Holy Father to allow him to continue to be a member of the Congregation even if he loses his clerical status or has no pastoral function whatsoever.

48. For any priest who is found guilty canonically of having committed sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable person, but has not been removed from the clerical state, in addition to complying with the instructions of the Holy See, if any, the priest must be required to take such measures as may be necessary to avoid putting minors or vulnerable adults at risk and to avoid further occasion for scandal. The readmission of the priest to the public exercise of ministry is excluded.

49. In all cases, the offending cleric must undergo the therapy deemed necessary and lead a life of prayer and penance, imposing on him the obligation to reside in an appropriate community of the Congregation where he can live out the restrictions and measures imposed (i.e., a personal safety plan), excluding the possibility of residing in a house of formation of the Congregation.

50. The territorial director shall assign a competent person to monitor the measures of the cleric's personal safety plan and to report regularly to him and to the review board about the priest's compliance.

51. Once the existence of a crime of sexual abuse has been confirmed, if there is sufficient evidence and if the competent major superior considers it necessary, he will open investigations or judicial proceedings on possible negligence related to the abuse that may have occurred in discovering or reporting the conduct. If appropriate, the major superior

may impose some precautionary measures during the preliminary investigation or the judicial process.

52. For cases of priests who were not tried in a formal process in the past and who, after investigating the facts, are found to have committed a notorious and undoubted crime or to have admitted their participation in a crime, the case will be presented to the Holy See requesting that the statute of limitations be lifted in order to initiate the due canonical process.

53. A priest who has committed sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult before becoming a cleric shall be judged in the first instance by the ecclesiastical tribunal of the same Congregation (see Canon 695) and the fact shall be made known to the civil authorities in accordance with the legislation proper to the place where the events occurred.

54. Any religious in formation, not yet a cleric, who is judged to have committed sexual abuse will have his request to leave the Legion accepted, if he submits it, or the process of dismissal from the Congregation will be initiated, in accordance with canon 695.

55. Anyone found guilty of failing to report, hindering the investigation or preventing the proper handling of a case of sexual abuse should receive a just penalty and be ineligible for appointment to a position of authority, a position as councilor to a superior, or to have responsibility in the field of safe environments (coordinator, investigator, review board, expert, and so forth).

56. Anyone found guilty of gross negligence in the handling of a sexual abuse case must receive a just penalty and cannot be appointed to one of the positions mentioned in the previous article for a period of at least six years after conviction.

57. About the possibility of being elected to the General Chapter or the territorial assemblies:

- a. One who has been canonically convicted of the sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult will lack passive voice (i.e., the ability to be elected) to participate in territorial assemblies and/or the General Chapter;
- b. If any priest has been found guilty by canonical sentence of having been gravely negligent, in accordance with canon 1389 §2, or of not reporting, hindering or interfering with civil investigations or canonical investigations, be they administrative or penal, against a cleric or religious in the crime of sexual abuse, he shall lose his passive voice for elections to the assemblies and general chapter during the time he has been punished with this expiatory sanction.

58. Anyone who has been formally reprimanded twice by the major superior for boundary violations with a minor cannot be appointed or

assigned to any ministry involving contact with minors or vulnerable adults for a period of at least six years after the second reprimand. If there is a recurrence, these measures may be imposed without any time limit.

59. These principles for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and these norms for application, may be updated or amended by the general director of the Legion of Christ with the consent of his council.

Conclusion

60. The Legion of Christ maintains its commitment to ensure safe environments in all its houses and institutions, to reach out to victims and to address any allegations or accusations that may arise. Furthermore, the Congregation is committed to ensuring that these measures are for the glory of God, the good of the Church and—rooted in the Gospel—the service of all people, especially those most in need. In these circumstances the Legion of Christ makes its own the words of the Apostle Paul: “Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

Appendices

Sexual abuse of a minor: contact or interaction between a minor and an adult in which the minor is used for the sexual stimulation of the adult. The crime occurs whenever an adult commits acts of a sexual nature with a minor. The Church establishes 18 years as the age of majority. In the civil sphere, the definition of minority varies from one country to another, depending on the legislation in force⁸.

Delicts against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue consisting of the following:

- a. forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts;
- b. perform sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person;
- c. the production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions⁹.

General Chapter: is the supreme authority of an institute of consecrated life. The General Chapter of the Legion of Christ meets every six years to elect the general government, to deal with the most important matters, as well as to make norms that are binding on all¹⁰.

Moral certainty: is that which is based on sufficient information or evidence, to the extent that something cannot reasonably be doubted.

Proper law: the legislation proper to an institute of consecrated life. It is said in reference to “common law,” which is the canonical legislation for the whole Church.

Canon law: the general legislation of the Catholic Church.

Review Board: a panel of people who function as an advisory body to the major superior. The board offers advice to the major superior to help him or her evaluate reports of child sexual abuse and sanctions.¹¹

Restorative justice: Restorative justice is a process through which the restoration of social order and the reparation of the damage or injury caused is sought by opting for dialogue and encounter, mitigating confrontation. It encourages the parties to seek the truth and to voluntarily acknowledge the existence of a conflict as a prelude to its resolution. It allows the victim and his or her timeframe to be the protagonist of the

8 Safe Environment Accreditation Standards of the Legion of Christ ([glossary](#) on the Vatican website)

9 See *Vos estis lux mundi*, art. 1 §1 a.

10 See Canon 631 §1.

11 See [www.vatican.va](#), [Glossary and terms](#),

process, and encourages awareness and responsibility of the offender in the recognition of the damage caused¹².

Boundaries (in the treatment or relationship with another person):

A prudential criterion, often dictated by the cultural context, which makes it possible to determine whether or not an action is appropriate in the relationship between two people. It applies especially when there is an unequal relationship between them (e.g., doctor/patient, psychologist/client, religious minister/faithful, social worker/person receiving services, and the like) and it has to do with both strictly professional behavior and behavior outside the professional sphere¹³.

Boundaries are usually classified as physical, emotional or behavioral:

- Physical boundaries have to do with who can touch a person, in what part of the body and to what extent;
- Emotional boundaries have to do with how close and intimate a relationship is acceptable, how much time is spent with a person and how much information is rightly shared;
- Behavioral boundaries have to do with what a person will or will not ordinarily according to his or her principles and convictions¹⁴.

Minor: Any person under the age of eighteen, or who is considered by law to be the equivalent of a minor.¹⁵

Culpable negligence: Whoever performs or illegitimately omits to perform an act of authority, of ministry or other function that has been assigned to him, resulting in damage to a third party.¹⁶ Its seriousness is judged according to the usual criteria of law or morality.

12 See <http://diccionariojuridico.mx/definicion/justicia-restaurativa/>. Starting from the old paradigm that states that every infraction is a violation and rupture of people and their relationships, restorative justice is a process through which the restoration of social order and the reparation of the damage or injury caused is sought by opting for dialogue and encounter, mitigating confrontation. It encourages the parties to seek the truth and to voluntarily acknowledge the existence of a conflict as a preliminary to its resolution. It turns the victim and his or her timeframe into the protagonist of the process, and encourages the awareness and responsibility of the offender in the recognition of the damage done. It recovers the vocation of re-inserting the process of justice, transcending the paradigms of the punitive systems of retributive justice and of the formal legal spaces based on the reproach and the return of the legitimate violence of the state as a response to the infringing violence, without invalidating or substituting its social function. It uses tools such as mediation, restorative meetings, listening circles, truth commissions...etc., in the search for elements, sometimes not evident, that can build reparative maps that formal justice does not reach. Restorative justice processes sometimes succeed in undoing the link between the victim and the victimizer (hatred, disgust, anger, guilt...etc.), putting an end to and undoing the bond established in suffering, and sometimes bringing about the emergence of a new bond and a new relationship based on reconciliation as a goal and a horizon" (See RÍOS MARTÍN, JULIÁN CARLOS - OLALDE ATAREJOS, ALBERTO JOSÉ, "Restorative Justice and Mediation. Postulados para el abordaje de su concepto y finalidad", in Revista de Mediación [2011]). (<https://revistademediacion.com/articulos/justicia-restaurativa-y-mediacion-postulados-para-el-abordaje-de-su-concepto-y-finalidad/>)

13 See GENERAL SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL, *Professional Boundaries: Guidance for Social Workers*, Reino Unido 2011.

14 See PRAESIDIUM SAFETY BULLETIN, *Spotlight on Boundaries*, Issue 8.

15 See *Vos estis lux mundi*, art. 1 §2 a.

16 See Canon 1389 § 2.

Vulnerable person: Any person in a state of illness, of physical or psychological impairment, or of –deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally limits his or her capacity to understand, to want or to resist the offence¹⁷.

Rapid Response Plan: Procedures for a rapid and professional response to allegations or accusations of sexual abuse¹⁸.

Major superior: The general or territorial superior.

Territory: Equivalent to “province” in the ecclesiastical sense, i.e. a group of several houses of an institute of consecrated life under one superior.

Boundary violation (in relations with another person): Occurs when a person –exceeds the acceptable limits in a relationship with another person. It can happen –inadvertently or consciously. The other person may not initially interpret it as inappropriate. It may also be the result of recklessness. This is not necessarily a morally wrong act or a crime. However, frequent boundary violations can be (or be perceived as) preparation for abuse, or even turn into an abuse.¹⁹.

17 *Vos estis lux mundi*, art. 1 §2 b.

18 Safe Environment Standards, No. 11.

19 VIRTUS, *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*, United States, 2004.

see GENERAL SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL, *Professional Boundaries: Guidance for Social Workers*, United Kingdom, 2011.



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