

# *DIOCESE OF HOUMA-THIBODAUX*

## *A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE*

### **QUESTIONNAIRE AND STATEMENT TO BE SIGNED BY ALL CLERICS, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE DIOCESE**

Preamble: It is the mission of the Church to be the living sign of Christ's presence to all people. Her credibility and the effectiveness of her preaching and teaching are directly related to her faithful witnessing to the values given her by Jesus Christ. Because the Church is not just another institution in society, but a living community brought into being and sustained by Christ himself, the Church has the right to expect a certain modicum of wholeness from those who wish to serve her in various forms of ministry. This is especially critical in ministry relating to minors.

Children come to learn, through repeated testing on their part, that their mother and father are always there, ready to meet their primary needs. As they pass from early childhood, the parents teach them that they can extend this act of implicit trust to other special individuals. They teach them that the capacity to care about the welfare of children can be found in other people, adults they meet on a regular basis, including members of the extended family, i.e., teachers, priests, youth ministers, etc.

For children sexually abused by a person who is identified in a special way with the Church, this entire system of protection and confidence is destroyed. The children feel that the basis on which they have built relationships with a small group of special people has collapsed beneath them – to say nothing of the effect this has on the relationship between society as a whole and the Church. The damage done extends well beyond a deep psychological wound; it causes radical soul-searching about the meaning of life and the pertinence of all that has been taught about God and about religion.

Any policy concerning the neglect and/or abuse of minors needs to be seen as part of an overall concern for spiritual, intellectual, psychological, professional, and personal health. The primary concern in this policy is the welfare of victims and potential future victims; the welfare of the Church, i.e. the credibility of her mission; and the welfare of the accused offender.

As part of this policy, all clerics, lay employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux as so designed in this policy, must complete the following questionnaire and statement. It is realized that some of these questions may be difficult. However, the task before us, as Church, is to deal effectively with the results of sexual scandals that have affected our Church, and to present ways and means to prevent recurrences of the neglect and sexual abuse of minors.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever been accused, verbally or in writing, or has a civil or criminal complaint ever been filed against you, alleging **sexual abuse**, other **physical abuse**, or **neglect** of a minor? Yes  No

If yes, give an explanation of the accusation and/or complaint. Please indicate date, nature and place of the incident leading to the accusation and/or complaint, where the accusation and/or complaint was filed and the disposition.

2. Have you ever terminated your employment or had your employment terminated for reasons relating to allegations of **sexual abuse**, or other **physical abuse**, or **neglect** of a minor by you?  
 Yes  No

If yes, give an explanation of the allegations. Please indicate the date, nature and place of the allegation(s), the disposition of the allegation(s) and your employer at the time; include employer's name, address and phone number.

- 3 Have you ever been arrested or convicted of any crime arising from **sexual abuse**, other **physical abuse, neglect** of a minor, or **any other felony**?  Yes  No

If yes, give explanation of the crime.

4. Have you ever received any medical treatment, physical or psychological for reasons involving **sexual abuse**, other **physical abuse** or **neglect** of a minor?  Yes  No

If yes, give a description of the treatment, including date(s), identify the treating physician including name, address and telephone number.

5. Have you ever been investigated for reasons involving **sexual abuse**, other **physical abuse**, or **neglect** of a minor?  Yes  No

If yes, give an explanation of the investigation. Please indicate the date and nature of the investigation, where the investigation took place, and the disposition of the investigation.

I hereby attest that this statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. All information provided by me may be verified by the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux. I agree to execute any release(s) necessary to permit the release to the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux information of prior employment, medical, judicial, and law enforcement records, and information pertinent to matters in this questionnaire.

_____ Signature	_____ SSN	_____ Date	
_____ Print Name	_____ Telephone Number		
_____ Street Address	_____ City	_____ State	_____ Zip Code

**NOTE:** A copy of this signed Questionnaire/Statement will be kept in the confidential file of the above named employee/volunteer in the Office of Pastoral Services.