

The Spiritan Congregation recognizes that sexual misconduct by Spiritans has devastating consequences for victims and their families. We are aware of the effects of this tragic behavior and are steadfastly committed to helping those affected.

This **Victim's Guide** provides information on

1. what is sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships
2. what the procedures are for responding to complaints of sexually inappropriate behavior,
3. to whom victims of 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 the 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 Minister and person receiving pastoral care from him.

**SEXUAL ABUSE** is sexual contact between a Minister and a minor or vulnerable adult.

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
- 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 Spiritan, 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 director, 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 Spiritan 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 Spiritan to maintain appropriate emotional and sexual boundaries with those with whom he works and/or serves.

## How Spiritans Respond to Complaints of Sexual Misconduct

The Spiritans respond to all allegations of sexual misconduct with great care. To ensure that we handle each instance promptly, thoroughly, and compassionately, the Spiritans have appointed a confrere to serve as the Pastoral Outreach Coordinator. He will listen to, understand, and offer help, including appropriate psychological counseling for those affected by sexual misconduct.

The Spiritans, through the Pastoral Outreach Coordinator and independent investigators, will respond swiftly to evaluate and investigate any accusation of sexual misconduct by a Spiritan.

A Spiritan who has engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor will be subject to a Safety Plan. This rigorous relapse prevention program provides appropriate psychological treatment designed by professionals specifically for offenders, and entails ongoing monitoring and supervision for the rest of his life in the community.

The Spiritans, consistent with the directives of the Catholic Bishop's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, are subject to an independent Review Board. This interdisciplinary board of lay professionals advises the Spiritans on all matters related to sexual misconduct.

## Preventing Sexual Misconduct

In addition to establishing procedures for responding to sexual misconduct, the Spiritans have undertaken a series of measures to prevent future incidents of abuse.

These include extensive mandatory psychological evaluation of seminarians and novices before they are professed into the community, and providing continuing education programs for the Spiritans about issues of sexuality and personal conduct.

## Together to Protect

It is our firm belief that Spiritans 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 Spiritan's 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 to protect 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 believe that a Spiritan has violated the boundaries outlined in this brochure, we urge you to report such behavior immediately to the Provincial Superior, and/or the Pastoral Outreach Coordinator. Your case will be handled with the strictest sensitivity and confidentiality.

Contact information for the Spiritans:

### Pastoral Outreach Office

Fr. Jeffrey Duaine, C.S.Sp.  
Provincial, U.S. Province  
6230 Brush Run Road  
Bethel Park, PA 15102-2214  
(412) 831-0302

## The Spiritan Commitment

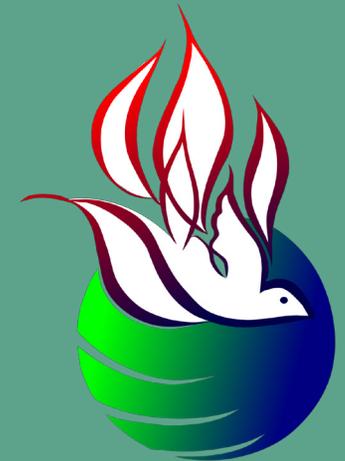
**We Spiritans** are concerned for any victims who may have suffered abuse by a Spiritan of the Province and for the families of those victims. We will offer pastoral and spiritual support to them, as well as professional counseling if requested. Our hope and prayer is to bring some healing and peace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

**We Spiritans** have dedicated ourselves to preventing sexual abuse. By establishing boundaries for healthy ministry with minors and by maintaining a constructive fraternal vigilance, we can minimize, even obviate the possibility of sexual abuse. Such prevention begins with education and training, both during initial as well as on-going formation.

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

# SEXUAL ABUSE

## A Guide for VICTIMS



presented by  
**The Spiritans**