



**Catholic Diocese of Phoenix**

**Guidelines for  
Pastoral Care of Vulnerable Adults**

**Implemented September 1, 2015**



*The Roman Catholic*  
*Diocese of Phoenix*

400 EAST MONROE, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85004-2336 TELEPHONE (602) 257-0030  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

September 1, 2015

*"The deepest element of God's commandment to protect human life is the requirement to show reverence and love for every person and the life of every person" - Evangelii Gaudium*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Christians, we believe that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God and contain intrinsic dignity which should be upheld by all serving within the Church. Many within our communities, particularly the vulnerable and elderly, are in need of pastoral care and compassion. As the Holy Father Pope Francis reminds us, "Christians are called to patiently build a more diverse, more welcoming, more humane society that does not need to discard the weak in body and mind. We need a society which measures its success in how the weak are cared for." With this in mind, the Diocese is implementing guidelines that specifically address pastoral care and the protection of vulnerable adults.

Christians are called to "learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2208) In the Diocese of Phoenix, every day, priests and laity make visits to the sick, elderly and vulnerable. As Christians, we have a responsibility to protect and care for those who cannot protect themselves. Since we represent Christ in caring for the vulnerable, the Church has a responsibility to ensure that Christian standards of care are upheld. In an effort to meet this ideal, these guidelines have been created to ensure vulnerable adults receive the highest amount of respect and care in accord with Christian principles.

It is my hope that these guidelines will provide valuable guidance to those who work with the vulnerable in the Diocese of Phoenix. In treating the vulnerable with the care and compassion of Christ, we affirm their dignity as sons and daughters of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Thomas J. Olmsted  
Bishop of Phoenix

# Table of Contents

---

## GUIDELINES

Preamble and Guiding Principles	4
Article 1. Requirements	5
Article 2. Expectations	6
Article 3. Reporting	7

## APPENDIX

Appendix I Definition of Terms and Resources	8
Appendix II Phone Numbers to Report Abuse	9
Appendix III Procedures for Reporting Abuse	10
Appendix IV Vulnerable Adult Abuse Reporting Form	11
Prayer by Pope St. John Paul II	12

# Catholic Diocese of Phoenix

---

## PREAMBLE

In His earthly ministry, Christ cared for the sick, the afflicted and the vulnerable, proclaiming salvation, and healing those in need. His concern for the weakest and the marginalized, exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan, set the model for the Church's care and compassion towards the suffering. Indeed, the Lord showed "preferential love" for those in greatest need, which "has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them." (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1503).

As Christians, it is our particular duty to care for our brothers and sisters in need, in obedience to the words of Christ: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Mt. 25:40) This care is manifested through providing access to the sacraments, particularly Holy Communion, Reconciliation, and the Anointing of the Sick, if necessary. However, the laity are also called to carry out pastoral visits and care for the vulnerable, and by doing this, act as an extension of the parish, making present the care of the community. "All of us can visit persons unable to leave their homes, ...read to those who cannot read, speak out for those who have difficulty pleading their cause. In touching lives...we come closest to imitating Jesus' own example, which should always be before our eyes." (Pastoral Statement of the USCCB on Persons with Disabilities).

Those caring for vulnerable adults should exhibit authentic care and compassion as representatives of the Church. The Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Vulnerable Adults will provide consistency of standards and expectations, while simultaneously allowing for the love of Christ to be fully present.

---

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As persons possessing dignity and made in the image and likeness of God Himself, vulnerable adults are to be treated with care and reverence. These *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Vulnerable Adults* are meant to assist all diocesan personnel and volunteers to minister safely with consistent standards which safeguard vulnerable adults, the well being of the community, and the integrity of the Catholic Church.

Within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, all members of the clergy, consecrated men or women, employees and volunteers who serve vulnerable adults shall treat them with the dignity and respect that is their intrinsic due. The Catechism of the Catholic Church instructs, "Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible." (CCC 2276)

## Vulnerable Adults

The Church views with special concern the plight of adults in our communities who, due to physical, psychological, emotional or mental conditions, or advanced age, find themselves vulnerable to harm or unable to protect themselves.

Vulnerable adults are generally defined as individuals who are eighteen years of age or older and who are unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation by others because of a mental or physical impairment. (See also ARS 13-3623)

---

### Article 1. Requirements

Care should be taken that those who serve vulnerable adults adequately represent the Church and the compassion of Christ to those whom they serve. All serving shall treat people with respect and dignity, as befits their position as persons made in the image and likeness of God.

This document applies to all Diocesan personnel and volunteers who serve vulnerable adults while representing the Diocese of Phoenix. (Examples include, but are not limited to: those providing pastoral service in private homes/institutions, serving in an outreach program, participating in meal service, facilitating bereavement and other support groups, etc.)

- All diocesan personnel and volunteers must also adhere to the *Diocesan Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors*, available online at: <http://safeenvironmenttraining.org/>
  - For specific resources for pastoral care workers, please refer to the document *Resources for Pastoral Care Leaders*, available online at: <http://www.diocesephoenix.org/uploads/docs/Resource-for-Pastoral-Care-Leaders-Margins.pdf>
  - For specific requirements regarding the direct pastoral care of vulnerable adults, please refer to the *Policy & Guidelines for Volunteers in the Pastoral and Eucharistic Care of the Sick and Dying*, available online at: <http://www.diocesephoenix.org/uploads/docs/Pastoral-Care-Policy-Guidelines-ENG.pdf>
  - In cases where the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is recommended, please refer to the *Diocesan Policies and Procedures for the Anointing of the Sick, Healing Faith*, available online at: <http://www.diocesephoenix.org/uploads/docs/AnointingGuidelines-Jun2009.pdf>
  - Norms for Driving and Transporting Passengers: (Transportation Policy and Driver Information Sheet) found online at: <http://www.diocesephoenix.org/finance-office-forms.php>
-

*“Speak tenderly. Let there be kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in the warmth of your greeting. Always have a cheerful smile. Don't only give your care, but give your heart as well.”*  
– Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

---

## Article 2. Expectations

All programs sponsored by diocesan locations shall be supervised or administered **by safe environment approved diocesan personnel or volunteer(s)**.

General Guidelines: All serving vulnerable adults within the Diocese of Phoenix shall:

- Work in union with the Bishop, pastors and deacons of the diocese to assist in providing pastoral care for vulnerable adults.
- Be chosen, trained and delegated by the pastor or his designee to be a model of faith, a sign of hope and a healing presence for the Catholic community.
- Cultivate a personal relationship with God through a life of daily prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments.
- Be aware of signs of physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse of vulnerable adults.
  - Note:** It is recommended that all donors contemplating significant financial contributions should first seek independent financial and legal counsel before doing so. People should also be encouraged to speak with family members before making any significant donations. Except where the purpose of the visit is stewardship or planned giving; ministering persons should not accept large/valuable personal gifts or donations from vulnerable adults.
- Establish boundaries appropriate to the pastoral relationship and maintain high ethical and professional standards in all interactions with vulnerable adults.
  - Avoid situations of extreme personal self-disclosure.
  - Only give and/or accept small/modest gifts or tokens of appreciation (e.g., candy, cards, rosaries or other religious items).
  - Allow family members/guardians the right to observe programs and activities in which vulnerable adults are involved.
- Know the process to report inappropriate behavior and/or abuse, and abide by Arizona Statutes and written Diocesan procedures when abuse is suspected, disclosed or observed.
- Follow parish protocol for documenting records of pastoral care visits, including who was visited, when and for how long, and provide to the supervisor as soon as possible after the visit.
- Be safe environment trained with all policy requirements being met (e.g., training, Volunteer Application, Code of Ethics, face to face interview, reference checks, etc.).

### Pastoral Visits

- It is generally recommended to arrange visits in advance with an established arrival time, approximate length of visit, and a clear purpose for the visit.
- When visiting institutional settings:
  - Comply with all rules of the institution and adhere to their policies and procedures.
  - Upon arrival, check in at front desk and/or the nurses' station.
  - Maintain a professional attitude while being friendly with the staff and family.
  - After the visit, follow parish protocol for pastoral visits record keeping and submit as required.
- When visiting private homes:

- Remember that you are a guest. Introduce yourself and maintain a professional attitude.
- Upon arrival, assess the situation for anything that may be out of the ordinary. Do not continue the visit if a person is inappropriately dressed, is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or if you feel unsafe for any reason.
- Stay in the most public areas of the home – the living room, family room or kitchen. Avoid entering a person's bedroom unless absolutely necessary (as when the person is bedridden). If entering a bedroom, another person should be present if possible.
- If you need to cancel or leave a visit due to concerns about your personal safety, immediately report the situation to the supervisor or call 911, if applicable. Do not agree to meet anyone if you sense your personal safety might be compromised.
- When visiting an institution or private home, remember the vulnerable adult's family may be in need of pastoral care as well.

Program Leadership: Leadership at each diocesan location shall:

- Annually review and approve all programs for vulnerable adults in parishes, institutions, agencies and ministries. A list of these programs shall be maintained and shall include activities, purpose, sponsors or coordinators of the programs, meeting times and locations.
- Supervise all employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable adults.
- Oversee that volunteers are following the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Vulnerable Adults* and the *Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors* including training, Volunteer Application, Code of Ethics, face to face interview, and reference checks (as applicable).
- Establish parish protocol for maintaining records of volunteers who visit group homes, private residences, hospitals, or medical facilities (e.g., locations volunteers visit, frequency of visits, etc) and the submission of those records to the supervisor.
- Be aware of the diocesan and state requirements for reporting abuse, and follow reporting procedures.

---

*“...in fidelity to the Gospel, we are called to reach out to those who find themselves in the existential peripheries of our societies and to show particular solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters: the poor, the disabled, the elderly...”*

*Pope Francis, Assembly of World Churches, October 2013*

---

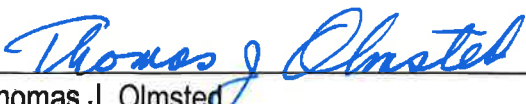
### **Article 3. Reporting**


All diocesan personnel and volunteers, while acting within the scope of their services in a parish, institution, agency or ministry, are mandated to report any abuse of vulnerable adults to law enforcement and/or Adult Protective Services. According to Arizona State Law, persons who make a report of abuse in good faith and without malice are entitled to immunity from any civil and criminal liability.


For procedures to report suspected or alleged abuse, see Appendix V “Procedures to Report.”


The failure of diocesan personnel and volunteers to report abuse as required by law will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and may be subject to penalties under state or federal law.

The *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Vulnerable Adults* were presented to the Diocese of Phoenix Presbyteral Council on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 and approved by Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted that same date. These guidelines will be implemented in the Diocese of Phoenix on September 1, 2015.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
+Thomas J. Olmsted  
Bishop of Phoenix

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Maria Chavira, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Appendix I - Definition of Terms and Resources

---

## DEFINITIONS

**Arizona Revised Statutes 46- 454:** Duty to report abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults to Adult Protective Services and/or local law enforcement.

<http://www.azleg.state.az.us/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/46/00454.htm&Title=46&DocType=ARS>

**Diocesan Location:** The term “diocesan locations” shall mean and include the Diocesan Pastoral Center, parishes, Catholic schools, missions, Catholic Cemeteries, retreat centers, Newman Centers, or other designated alternate locations.

**Diocesan Personnel:** The term “diocesan personnel” shall mean and include priests and deacons (clerics), consecrated men or women, seminarians, deacon candidates, and the lay faithful who are paid whether employed in areas of ministry of other kinds of services by the Diocese of Phoenix in a diocesan location.

**Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator in the Office of Child and Youth Protection:** The Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection serves as the diocesan victim assistance coordinator for minors and vulnerable adults. The Office of Child and Youth Protection receives allegations of abuse of vulnerable adults and coordinates pastoral outreach to affected individuals and communities.

**Emotional Abuse:** A pattern of ridiculing or demeaning a vulnerable adult, making derogatory remarks to a vulnerable adult, verbally harassing a vulnerable adult or threatening to inflict physical or emotional harm on a vulnerable adult.

**Financial Exploitation:** The illegal or improper use of a vulnerable adult or his or her resources for another's profit or advantage. Possible indications of financial exploitation may include disparity between income/assets and lifestyle; unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills, purchase food or personal care items; inaccurate, confused, or no knowledge of finances; fear or anxiety when discussing finances; unprecedented transfer of assets from an older person to others; extraordinary interest by family members in a vulnerable adult's assets.

**Neglect:** A pattern of conduct without the person's informed consent resulting in deprivation of food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health. Signs of neglect may include dehydration, malnutrition, hypo/hyperthermia; excessive dirt or odor; inadequate or inappropriate clothing for weather conditions; absence of eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures or prosthesis; unexpected or unexplained deterioration of health; bedsores, signs of excess drugging or lack of medication or other misuse of medical treatment.

**Physical Abuse:** Impairment of a vulnerable adult's physical condition, including any of the following: skin bruising, pressure sores, bleeding, failure to thrive, malnutrition, dehydration, burns, fracture of a bone, subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, injury to any organ, and any physical condition which imperils health or welfare.

**Self Neglect:** Any failure of a vulnerable adult to care for him or her self that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause, serious physical, mental or emotional harm or substantial damage to or loss of assets. Examples may include: living in grossly unsanitary conditions, illness, disease or injury left untreated, malnutrition, etc.

**Sexual Abuse:** Intentionally or knowingly engaging in sexual contact or conduct with a vulnerable adult. Abuse can include inflicting or allowing sexual abuse, sexual conduct with a vulnerable adult, sexual assault, and molestation of a vulnerable adult, commercial sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult, and sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult, incest, or prostitution as detailed in the Arizona Revised Statutes. Sexual abuse also includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of vulnerable adults for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology.

## Appendix II –Phone Numbers to Report Abuse

---

<b>LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	
ANTHEM	602-876-1011 / 602-262-6151
APACHE JUNCTION	480-982-8260
AVONDALE	623-333-7000
BAGDAD	928-771-3260
BAPCHULE /SACATON	520-562-4511 / 520-562-3361
BUCKEYE	623-386-4421
BULLHEAD CITY	928-763-1999
CAMP VERDE	928-567-6621
CAREFREE	602-876-1011
CASHION	623-333-7001
CAVE CREEK	602-876-1011
CHANDLER	480-782-4130
COCONINO COUNTY	928-774-4523
COTTONWOOD	928-649-1397
EL MIRAGE	623-933-1341
FLAGSTAFF	928-774-1414
FOUNTAIN HILLS	602-252-7840
GILA BEND	602-876-1011
GILBERT	480-503-6500
GLENDALE	623-930-3000
GOODYEAR	623-932-1220
GRAND CANYON	<b>Inside</b> the Park: 928-638-7805 <b>Outside</b> the Park: 928-774-4523
GUADALUPE	602-876-1011
KINGMAN	928-753-1911
LAKE HAVASU CITY	928-855-4111
LAVEEN	602-876-1011
LITCHFIELD	602-876-1011
MARICOPA COUNTY	602-876-1011
MESA	480-644-2211
MOHAVE COUNTY	928-753-0753
PARADISE VALLEY	480-948-7410
PEORIA	623-773-7061
PHOENIX	602-262-6151
PRESCOTT	928-445-3131
PRESCOTT VALLEY	928-772-9267
QUEEN CREEK	602-876-1011
SCOTTSDALE	480-312-5000
SEDONA	928-282-3100
SELIGMAN	928-771-3266
SUN CITY	602-876-1011
SUN CITY WEST	602-876-1011
SUN LAKES	602-876-1011
SURPRISE	623-222-4000
TEMPE	480-350-8311
TOLLESON	623-936-7186
YAVAPAI COUNTY	928-771-3260
YOUNGTOWN	602-876-1011
WICKENBURG	928-684-5411
WILLIAMS	928-635-4461

**Adult Protective Services - 1-877-767-2385 or <https://www.azdes.gov/daas/aps/>**

**Ak-Chin Indian Community: 520-568-1200**

**Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: 480-837-1091**

**Gila River Indian Community: 520-562-7106**

**Tohono O'odaham Nation: 520-383-3275**

**Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community: 480-850-9230**

## Appendix III – Procedures for Reporting Abuse

---

If diocesan personnel or a volunteer has reasonable belief that sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect of a vulnerable adult has occurred, they are mandated to make a report to civil authorities.

1. Listen attentively to the vulnerable adult.
2. Stay calm and keep the vulnerable adult in a safe environment.
3. Assure and affirm the vulnerable adult: the abuse was not his/her fault and they did the right thing by reporting.
4. If the vulnerable adult discloses **sexual abuse** – do not ask questions. Leave questioning of the vulnerable adult for the trained interviewer.
5. If the vulnerable adult discloses **physical or emotional abuse** – you can ask what happened, who did it, where did it happen, when did it happen?
6. When the vulnerable adult is stable and secure, **immediately report** the allegations to law enforcement, and wait for further instructions regarding contacting Adult Protective Services (APS). Reports to APS may be made online by going to <https://www.azdes.gov/daas/aps/>. Keep documentation that a report was made (at diocesan location if applicable) either by completing the Vulnerable Adult Abuse Reporting Form (found in Appendix IV) or by printing out a copy of the report made online to APS.
7. If the accused is a member of the clergy, a consecrated man or woman, an employee, or a volunteer of the Church, after reporting to law enforcement and/or APS, immediately contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator in the Office of Child and Youth Protection (602) 354-2396.
8. After reporting, do not attempt to investigate and do not discuss the incident with anyone unless required to do so in conjunction with the investigation.

**\*If you have any questions on reporting or need assistance, contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator in the Office of Child and Youth Protection (602) 354-2396.**

# Appendix IV - Vulnerable Adult Abuse Reporting Form

After a report is made to law enforcement and/or Adult Protective Services (APS), this form should be completed to serve as documentation that a report was made. If a report is made online to APS (<https://www.azdes.gov/daas/aps/>), the online report may be printed out to serve as documentation instead of this form. A copy of all documentation should be kept at the diocesan location, if applicable.

<b>General Information: A report was made to:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Protective Services <input type="checkbox"/> Both			
Date/Time reported to Police or APS Adult Abuse Hotline	Ask for location (or) fax # of where to send report	Police or APS Hotline Phone Number used to make report	Name of Person receiving report. Badge number if available
<b>Person Making Report</b>			
First Name of Person Making Report	Last Name of Person Making Report	Contact Phone Number for Person Submitting Report	
<b>Vulnerable Adult's Information</b>			
Vulnerable Adult's First Name	Vulnerable Adult's Last Name	Vulnerable Adult's Date of Birth	
Street Address	City	State	Zip
<b>Legal Guardian or Primary Caregiver (if applicable)</b>			
Guardian or Caregiver Last Name	Guardian or Caregiver First Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver	
Street Address	City	State	Zip
Home Telephone Number	Work Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	

If the accused is a member of the clergy, a consecrated man or woman, an employee, or a volunteer of the Catholic Church, contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator in the Office of Child and Youth Protection at 602-354-2396 and provide a copy of this report via confidential fax 602-354-2469.

**In summary below include the following:**

- Nature and extent of the injuries or physical neglect; including evidence of previous injuries or physical neglect
- Any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the physical injury or physical neglect
- Retain a copy of report including written summary for your personal records.

<b>Summary of incident/observation:</b>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Prayer by Pope Saint John Paul II

---

Grant, O Lord of life,

That we may savor every season of our lives as a gift  
filled with promise for the future.

Grant that we may lovingly accept your will,  
and place ourselves each day in your merciful hands.  
And when the moment of our definitive passage comes,  
grant that we may face it with serenity,  
without regret for what we shall leave behind.

For in meeting you,  
after having sought you for so long,  
we shall find once more every authentic good  
which we have known here on earth,  
in the company of all who have gone before us  
marked with the sign of faith and hope.

Mary, Mother of pilgrim humanity,  
pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

Keep us ever close to Jesus, your beloved Son and our brother,  
the Lord of life and glory.

Amen

---