



**Dioceses in Four New England States Launch Independent
Third-Party System to Report Misconduct by Bishops**

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Dioceses of the Boston Province (listed below) have launched a third party, independent system to report abuse by Catholic bishops. The Bishops of the province have agreed to make a reporting system available now in the wake of Pope Francis' landmark *Vos estis* letter and the nearly unanimous response to that letter by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in June 2019.

To file and track a submission, please visit www.Bishopreporting.ethicspoint.com.

On May 9, 2019, Pope Francis promulgated a *Motu Proprio*, entitled *Vos estis lux mundi*, that identifies substantive measures to respond to the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the Church. This includes requiring all dioceses in every country to establish a public, accessible and reliable system for reporting crimes of clergy sexual abuse and any cover-up of abuse by May 31, 2020. It also requires the establishment of new procedural norms for investigating crimes by bishops and supreme moderators of religious institutes, including both allegations of sexual abuse and any cover up by way of actions or omissions intended to conceal information or to interfere with investigations.

At the June 2019 meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, a measure was approved to establish a third-party national reporting system for allegations or complaints involving bishops in the United States. The system will be designed to receive, via phone or email, confidential information reporting possible violations by bishops. This vote was taken following guidance articulated in Pope Francis *Vos estis lux mundi*.

Vos estis lux mundi allows until May 31, 2020, for the development of local systems to receive such reports. With the understanding that the implementation of the national system is months away, the bishops of the Boston Province agreed to join a program already established by the Archdiocese of Boston through an independent EthicsPoint[™] website. The Province includes the Archdiocese of Boston (MA), Diocese of Fall River (MA), Diocese of Worcester (MA), Diocese of Springfield (MA), Diocese of Burlington (VT), Diocese of Manchester (NH) and the Diocese of Portland (ME).

Much has been accomplished over nearly two decades to address the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, including instituting mandatory reporting to civil authorities, protection and prevention training, and pastoral support and outreach for survivors, among other steps. However, more is required to ensure that there is an effective and independent system in place to report misconduct by bishops.

Those who were sexually abused by clergy, along with their families and loved ones, must always be the central focus of our ongoing response to the sexual abuse of minors. There is no doubt that they have suffered greatly. In order for the Catholic Church to continue to restore trust and credibility, leadership must be committed to transparency and accountability. We hope and pray that this effort will further strengthen the work begun nearly two decades ago to offer healing.

Bishops of the Boston Province

Massachusetts

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, OFM, Cap.
Archbishop of Boston

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski
Bishop of Springfield

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, SDV
Bishop of Fall River

New Hampshire

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Bishop of Manchester

Vermont

Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington

Maine

Most Reverend Robert P. Deeley, JCD
Bishop of Portland

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