



¡Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!

Implementation of Recommendations of the Lay Commission on Clergy Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Archdiocese of San Antonio

On October 10, 2018 I announced our plan to form a Lay Commission on Clergy Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. I invited the Honorable Catherine M. Stone, retired Chief Justice of the Texas Fourth District Court of Appeals, to form and lead this commission. The commission carefully reviewed and verified the accuracy of our January 31 Report on Child Sexual Abuse by Clergy in the Archdiocese of San Antonio which covered all allegations between 1940 and the present. I also asked them to examine and comment on the procedures and practices used by the Archdiocese in responding to these allegations, and in their report they made suggestions for improved or best practices going forward.

I am very grateful for the hard work that this commission did, and particularly grateful for the thoughtful recommendations that they made. It has been almost nine months since the Commission released their recommendations, and I want to take this opportunity to identify the concrete steps that the Archdiocese has taken in response to their efforts.

In order to bring greater clarity to our written policies, on May 28, 2019, I promulgated a revised Code of Conduct for all who work and minister in the Catholic churches within the Archdiocese. This Code is accompanied by additional training for all who minister to minors. As part of this same effort, we have updated and published on our website the Archdiocesan Policy for Ministry to Minors.

At the recommendation of the commission, we have established a process to annually review all codes of conduct, all guidelines and handbooks related to sexual abuse of minors, and all policies directing the work of the Office for Victim Assistance and Safe Environment. This annual review is added to the text of the relevant policies, has been added to the responsibilities of the appropriate staff members, and includes input and oversight from the Archdiocesan Review Board. The Board has added this new oversight responsibility to their Bylaws.

In establishing the Code of Conduct, we contracted with EthicsPoint, a third party hotline provider, to take reports of violations of our Code of Conduct. Violations can be reported to EthicsPoint through our website or by calling (844)709-1169.

The Archdiocesan Review Board was formed in compliance with Article 2 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* on June 22, 2003. The majority of the members of this board must be laypersons not employed by the Catholic Church. All nominations for membership on the Board are voted on and proposed by Archdiocesan Review Board. At the recommendation of the Commission, we formalized this nominating process by forming a standing Nominating Committee of the Review Board. The primary purpose of the Board is to

assist me with confidential consultation in the discharge of my duties as outlined in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, in the *Essential Norms*, and in the apostolic letter *Vos estis lux mundi*. The Board assists me in the evaluation and oversight of our Office for Victim Assistance and Safe Environment. At the recommendation of the Lay Commission, we have published the bylaws of this Board on our website.

To help ensure that we continue to effectively respond to all allegations, we have developed a case management system that will assist us to track our fulfillment of all of our commitments related to each allegation. With the same goal, we have established more concrete procedures and have involved additional staff to ensure ongoing compliance. This case management system will also help ensure that we are able to see the context within which a particular allegation is made.

To better assist those who have an allegation to bring forward, we have clarified our intake procedure, developed a standard intake form, and published all relevant information to a highly visible place on our website. It is my hope that these steps will help survivors be more confident in reporting sexual abuse. Since the Commission's report, we have undertaken a comprehensive redesign of our website, with particular focus on ensuring that safe environment, code of conduct, and victim assistance materials are easily located and readily accessed.

Once again, I offer my gratitude to the members of the Lay Commission for the difficult work that they have accomplished. I also express my ongoing gratitude to the members of the Archdiocesan Review Board who continue guiding our efforts to build a safe environment for all of our children. Finally, I am grateful to our pastoral team who have been so responsive to the suggestions made and have so meaningfully improved our procedures and communication during the last nine months.

October, 30, 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gustavo" in a large, flowing script, with "m.sp.s." written in a smaller, simpler script below it.

Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S.
Archbishop of San Antonio

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sister Jane Ann Slater, C.D.P." in a cursive script.

Sr. Jane Ann Slater, C.D.P.
Chancellor