

## **RESOLUTION November 19, 1992**

Gathered in General Assembly, we the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops express our profound concern for all those who have been victims of sexual abuse, particularly when that abuse has been committed by a member of the clergy. The President of our Conference, at the close of our Assembly last June, spoke clearly and eloquently to this subject with our assent. We reaffirm that statement here, and recognize that policies to address the grave issues presented by this problem are in place throughout our country. In the course of our Assembly this week, we have reflected -- once again and more deeply upon the pain, anguish and sense of alienation felt by victims. At the same time, we affirm the thousands of good, holy and dedicated priests who minister faithfully to God's people. We pledge ourselves to one another to return to our dioceses and there to examine carefully and prayerfully our response to sexual abuse; to assure ourselves that our response is appropriate and effective; and to be certain that our people are aware of and confident in that response. Among the elements to be considered for ongoing response, we continue to recommend the following:

1. Respond promptly to all allegations of abuse where there is a reasonable belief that abuse has occurred.
2. If such an allegation is supported by sufficient evidence, relieve the alleged offender promptly of his ministerial duties and refer him for appropriate medical evaluation and intervention.
3. Comply with the obligations of civil law as regards reporting of the incident and cooperating with the investigation.
4. Reach out to the victims and their families and communicate our sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being.
5. Within the confines of respect for the privacy of the individuals involved, deal as openly as possible with members of the community.

In these days of our Assembly, we are reminded again that all our actions should show our Church as a living, caring and healing Church. We pledge again our care and concern for all victims of abuse, wherever and however it occurs. We commit ourselves anew to bring the healing ministry of our Church to our people, to dialogue and pray with all who have suffered, and to foster opportunities for reconciliation. Attachment:

Statement of Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk issued June 20, 1992