



Oblates of St. Francis de Sales

HOW THE OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES OF THE TOLEDO-DETROIT PROVINCE RESPONDS TO COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

An allegation of sexual misconduct is a very serious matter and is treated as such. Our goal is to respond to each allegation promptly, thoroughly, and compassionately. We have retained Adrienne Rowland, LMSW, ACSW, as our Victim Assistance Coordinator. She can be reached directly at 888-308-6252 or by e-mail: arowlandvac@dioceseoflansing.org. Adrienne is there to take information, to listen, to understand, and offer help, including sources for appropriate psychological counseling.

The Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, upon receiving Adrienne's report, and with the assistance of an independent professional investigator, will respond swiftly to evaluate an initial complaint and investigate any accusation of sexual misconduct. The investigation will be thorough.

Consistent with the directives of the Catholic Bishop's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, and the policies of the Oblates, a "Review Board" will review and if necessary further investigate the complaint. This interdisciplinary board of lay professionals advises the Oblates on all matters related to sexual misconduct. When the evidence is clear that a religious has engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor he will, from that time forward, be removed from all public ministry. Depending on the seriousness of the case he will also be subject to expulsion from the religious order and from priesthood. If the judgment is that expulsion is not called for, he will be removed from public ministry and placed in a rigorous relapse prevention program which provides appropriate psychological treatment specific for offenders, and entails ongoing monitoring and supervision for the rest of his life in the Oblates.

PREVENTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

In addition to establishing procedures for responding to sexual misconduct, the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales have undertaken a series of measures to prevent future incidents of abuse. These include extensive mandatory psychological evaluation of candidates and novices before they enter formation and the provision of continuing education programs for Members about issues of sexuality and personal conduct.

CONCLUSION

It is our firm belief that a religious must maintain appropriate boundaries with all those to whom he ministers in order to preserve the integrity of the ministerial relationship. Moreover, we call upon those with knowledge of a Member's inappropriate behavior to come forward with this information so that it may be evaluated and innocent victims may be spared from further harm.