



## Making a Report of Abuse

Any adult reporting sexual abuse as a minor or any minor abused by a member of the clergy or other diocesan personnel should immediately contact local, county and/or state law enforcement authorities. Those wishing to report directly to the Diocese are to call or e-mail Dr. Robert Nelsen, our Victim Assistance Coordinator. Dr. Nelsen's phone number is (814) 871-7723 and his e-mail address is [nelsen001@gannon.edu](mailto:nelsen001@gannon.edu). Dr. Nelsen works comprehensively and confidentially to assist victims in obtaining outpatient counseling, facilitate spiritual and mental health support services and maintain contact in order to insure that the counseling provided is helpful. He is also available to provide victims with valuable information and resources for promoting healing, stability and security.

Those reporting who wish to speak to a member of the Bishop's staff may direct their call to one of the following - the Vicar General, Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Director of Clergy Personnel or Coordinator of the Office for the Protection of Children. They can be reached by dialing (800) 373 - 3723. To reach them by e-mail, use the person's first initial and last name followed by [@erieRCD.org](mailto:@erieRCD.org). For names and other contact information, visit the diocesan web site: [www.erieRCD.org](http://www.erieRCD.org).

Each and every allegation is taken seriously by the Diocese. The preferred method in responding is to speak personally to the one reporting the abuse. At the meeting, the one reporting will be required to sign an *Advisory Statement for the Report of Sexual Misconduct*. There are no legal consequences or obligations in signing the *Statement*. Its purpose is to document the fact that the person reporting was advised by the diocese of their right to make a report to public authorities. Should a personal meeting prove impossible, the *Advisory Statement* will be mailed with the request that it be signed and returned immediately.

The Diocese reports all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor to the public authorities and complies with all applicable civil law. If the allegation is against a diocesan priest or deacon, the Bishop contacts and speaks with the accused cleric. What information he has is then reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator and Diocesan Review Board. The Diocesan Review Board advises the Bishop in his assessment of the allegations and offers advice on all aspects of the case. Any diocesan investigation will be conducted with respect for that being conducted by civil authorities and in accord with Canon Law.

If there is suspicion or knowledge that a child is being abused, the one so informed should immediately notify **Child Line** (800-932-0313), the State of Pennsylvania Hotline number for the protection of children.