



## **STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF FLORIDA ON CONCERN AND COMPASSION FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

**March 2002**

We, the Catholic Bishops of Florida, express our abiding concern and compassion for victims of sexual abuse. The sexual abuse of anyone, most especially children, evokes sentiments of natural revulsion, anger and great sadness. It is both criminal and sinful.

The people of God have a right to be able to trust those who minister to them in God's name. Any violation of this trust is a source of great pain, not only for those involved, but also for the entire church community, including our many dedicated and faithful priests. When this trust is violated, our primary consideration is the pastoral and spiritual care of all those affected.

For many years, the diocese of Florida have implemented procedures and guidelines\* to deal with allegations of sexual misconduct by church personnel and volunteers, be they clergy, religious or laypersons. These guidelines comply with the reporting laws of the State of Florida.

We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of those who are served by the Catholic Church in Florida. It is our sincere hope that all persons of goodwill join us in diligently working for the protection and safety of those in our society who are vulnerable, especially our children. As we serve the people of God, we pray that the compassion of Christ's Gospel be our guiding principle.

\* <http://www.flacathconf.org/Publications/Sexualabusepolicy.htm>