

## MISSION & MINISTRY

The Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau is committed to the mission and ministry of protecting our children and young people. Through the Safe Environment policy and procedures, our clergy, employees, teachers, and our volunteers who regularly work with children and youth have been trained to support this effort to create and maintain a safe environment for our youth. We believe strongly in our moral obligation to keep the young safe and provide them with a caring environment in which they can grow and flourish in their faith.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau and its Affiliates promote a Zero-Tolerance Policy regarding sexual misconduct and are committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for all of God's people: one that is free from any form of sexual misconduct, which is antithetical to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

For the purposes of this policy, sexual misconduct means any behavior of a sexual nature that occurs between diocesan personnel and a minor or an adult which includes sexual abuse, enticement, exploitation, and any other such behavior, or the appearance of any such behavior, whether in person, verbal, written, or through the use of technology or other media, that is defined by and contrary to the moral teachings, doctrines, and Canon Law of the Catholic Church; and/or unlawful as described by laws: local, state, and federal.

This policy applies to all diocesan personnel, including clergy, seminarians, consecrated religious, diocesan, parish and school employees, and adult volunteers. Any violation of this policy will be grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

In its annual report, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) utilizes five categorizations for determinations made by the Review Boards of each (arch)diocese, which include Credible, Unsubstantiated, Obviously False, Unable to be Proven, and Investigation Ongoing. The allegations that involve clergy that are deceased and/or alleged victims of sexual abuse or misconduct that are deceased at the time the report is received and are not determined to be "Obviously False," should be categorized as "Unable to be Proven," as an investigation could not be completed.

We continue to pray and offer support for those harmed by abuse and maltreatment.