

Crosier Fathers and Brothers' Process for Responding to an Allegation

Upon Receipt of Report of Sexual Abuse

Normally, Crosier leadership refers the individual to the Survivor Assistance Coordinator, who is trained to work with survivors of sexual abuse and will serve as a liaison between the major superior and the survivor. However, the survivor may choose to work directly with the major superior or another Crosier member. *N.B. If an allegation of sexual abuse is made against the major superior, the master general of the Order of the Holy Cross is informed, and he thereafter directs the response to the report.*

Initial Response to a Report

The Crosier Fathers and Brothers or designee assures the survivor that the Crosiers do not tolerate sexual abuse and takes seriously all reports of sexual abuse; explains Crosier leadership's process for responding to reports of sexual abuse and offer to provide a copy of the Crosiers' Statement of Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse; answers the survivor's questions about the policies and procedures of the Crosiers; expresses care and concern for the survivor; and when the survivor is anonymous, encourages the survivor to identify herself or himself and the Crosier member involved in the sexual abuse. The survivor is informed that he/she is free to make a report to law enforcement.

In all meetings with the Crosier Fathers and Brothers or its designee, the survivor may be accompanied by another person of her or his choice. If requested, Crosier leadership may offer recommendations for trained support persons.

Initial Meeting with the Survivor

The major superior, Survivor Assistance Coordinator, or another designee interviews the survivor in person or, if that is not possible, by telephone. In this and all meetings, the survivor may be accompanied by another person of her or his choice. The survivor is asked to provide as much information about the sexual abuse as he or she is comfortable sharing and may be asked to provide the information in writing or to sign a written statement. Insofar as possible, Crosier leadership will respect the wishes of the survivor regarding confidentiality. However, as mandated reporters, Crosier leadership may be legally required to disclose the identity of the survivor; thus, the Crosiers cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality.

The major superior, Survivor Assistance Coordinator, or other designee discusses with the survivor her or his needs for pastoral care or professional counseling. If requested, the Crosiers or designee will help to put the survivor in touch with persons who can provide such care or counseling. In appropriate cases, the Crosier Fathers and Brothers will help to defray the costs of any professional counseling. A contact person, normally the Survivor Assistance Coordinator, keeps in regular contact with the survivor and informs the survivor of significant developments.

Preliminary Review of the Case

The major superior and/or designee carefully reviews the preliminary information provided by the survivor. If this initial report appears credible and involves sexual abuse, the major superior/designee informs the local ordinary where the events are said to have taken place and conducts a more thorough review

Initial Meeting with the Crosier Member

The major superior usually meets with the Crosier member after the preliminary review is concluded (accompanied by another person). The major superior will clarify that the meeting is not confidential and that the major superior may disclose anything that he is told. The member is provided with information regarding the complaint and is asked to respond; this response may be requested in writing. In cases involving an allegation of sexual abuse that appears credible, the major superior suspends the Crosier

member from public ministry in order to assure the safety of the public, places restrictions on his ministry, or requests that the religious take a leave of absence from public ministry until Crosier leadership's investigation is concluded. This action is not an indication that Crosier leadership has concluded that the allegations are true.

Consultation with Review Board

The major superior consults with the review board. The major superior may also appoint an advisory panel who can recommend a course of action.

Assessment of the Information

The major superior reviews all of the information and decides upon a course of action including, but not limited to, no further action, further investigation, requesting the member to undergo a psychological evaluation, removing him from pastoral care of souls or other canonical processes. He may consult further with the Review Board.

Final Decision

The major superior makes a final decision regarding the status of the Crosier member. If there is an established allegation of sexual abuse, the major superior removes the individual from any public ministry and may take additional actions against the member, including initiating canonical procedures against him to remove him as a Crosier member. If the allegation is not established, steps are taken to restore the good name of the Crosier.

The major superior makes an effort to provide care for the person who reports any abuse by a Crosier and to inform the person who alleged the offence of the final decision regarding the Crosiers' response to the accusation. The major superior also makes an effort to provide fraternal care for the Crosier.

Disclosure

Crosier leadership discloses all established allegations of sexual abuse by one of its members; such disclosure will vary from case to case but, generally, disclosure of sexual abuse is made to the Crosier's ministry assignments and to Crosiers if (a) the member admits to committing sexual abuse; or (b) the member resigns after being accused of sexual abuse; or (c) the member is removed, either temporarily or permanently, from pastoral care of souls in response to an allegation of sexual abuse; or (d) secular legal proceedings (civil or criminal) are initiated against the member for sexual abuse.

To protect the privacy of those abused by the Crosier member, only the following will be disclosed: (a) the fact that the member has been accused of, admitted to, or been found guilty of committing sexual abuse against a minor or vulnerable adult; (b) whether the survivor was an adult or a minor at the time of the sexual abuse; and (c) where the abuse was alleged to have taken place. Disclosure will almost never include the name of the survivor or facts from which she or he could readily be identified. If the Crosier has denied the allegations, that fact will also be disclosed.

At that time of disclosure, other persons who believe that they have been harmed (directly or indirectly) by the Crosier member will be invited to contact the Crosier leadership either directly or through the Survivor Assistance Coordinator, the Contact Team, or the civil authorities.

Follow-up

Crosier leadership works with dioceses and other entities to help ensure that care and support are available for all of those harmed by sexual abuse by clergy and religious.