



# Diocese of Springfield

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Diocese enters into agreement with western Massachusetts District Attorneys' Offices on reporting sexual misconduct allegations**

**SPRINGFIELD** - The Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield has entered into a "Memorandum of Understanding"(MOU) with the district attorneys' offices of the Berkshire, Hampden, and Northwestern districts setting out a standard procedure for the reporting of all sexual misconduct allegations known to the diocese.

This agreement is the result of extensive discussions over the last year with the three district attorneys' offices, addressing concerns over inconsistencies in how past abuse allegations were reported by the diocese. The MOU outlines policies by which the diocese will report any allegations it becomes aware of involving sexual misconduct by diocesan representatives of children or vulnerable adults, regardless of when the abuse is reported to have taken place. The agreement also establishes policies for documenting the receipt of any allegations forwarded to a jurisdiction and follow-up communications between the respective district attorney's office and the diocese.

In addition, all parties agreed that the diocese will not begin its review/investigation process of allegations for 90 days or until the respective district attorney's office informs the diocese it can proceed to avoid any unintentional interference when a criminal investigation is opened.

The MOU was signed by Hampden County District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni, Berkshire County District Attorney Andrea Harrington, and Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan, along with the legal counsel for the diocese, Attorney John J. Egan and Springfield Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski.

"I am most grateful to all who worked so diligently in preparing this agreement, one which demonstrates our commitment to work with law enforcement in identifying all allegations of sexual misconduct that come to our attention," commented Bishop Rozanski.

Jeffrey J. Trant, director of the diocesan Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance, worked with the Hampden County District Attorney's Office, which represented all three western Massachusetts district attorneys' offices in the preparation of the MOU. Trant, who will be the point person for the diocese, believes this is a significant step forward.

"Sexual abuse of a child or a vulnerable adult is a crime, period! It is the diocese's responsibility to report these allegations to criminal and civil authorities," said Trant. "The MOU establishes a standardized process for reporting to law enforcement officials, in addition to our responsibilities as mandated reporters, so these allegations can first be investigated and assessed in accordance with law."

The MOU goes into effect immediately.

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