



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Canadian Reporting System for Sexual Abuse or Cover-up by a Catholic Bishop furthers the commitment of the Catholic Church in Canada to protect minors and vulnerable persons from sexual abuse

6 May 2021 – Halifax – Today, the Bishops of Canada launch a national, bilingual service for reporting situations of sexual abuse either committed or covered-up by a Bishop. This service furthers their commitment to responsibility, accountability and transparency in matters of clergy sexual abuse and their commitment to facilitate healing and justice for victims-survivors.

The *Canadian Reporting System for Sexual Abuse or Cover-up by a Catholic Bishop* is a direct response to Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter entitled [*Vos estis lux mundi*](#) (You are the light of the world). In this Letter, the Pope calls on dioceses and eparchies throughout the world to establish "...one or more public, stable and easily accessible systems for submission of reports...". With *Vos estis lux mundi*, the Pope indicates what procedures must be followed in the universal Church when allegations are made against a Bishop. In doing so, he updates, clarifies and standardizes practices around the world. The reporting system for Bishops introduces an additional level of accountability for Church leadership in Canada, alongside the existing diocesan/eparchial protocols for reporting and responding to sexual abuse or other sexual misconduct by priests, deacons, religious, and mandated lay pastoral personnel.

"Our society must aim to create a climate of safety where the abuse of children and vulnerable people is simply not tolerated, and where their support is paramount," began Dr. Delphine Collin-Vézina, PhD, Director of the Centre for Research on Children and Families, and Director of the Canadian Consortium on Child & Youth Trauma, as well as full Professor, School of Social Work & Associate Member, Department of Pediatrics at McGill University. "The newly established national, bilingual system for reporting sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, or cover-up by a Catholic Bishop in Canada is an important step forward in this direction. This system is rooted in a victim-first approach and aims to remove the multiple barriers that prevent disclosure. These abuses have been silenced and covered up for too long, leaving victims and survivors unheard. I applaud this initiative led by the Bishops of Canada, which will hopefully facilitate healing and recovery for those who were abused."

[ClearView Strategic Partners](#), a Canadian provider of an independent ethics reporting and whistleblowing platform, was engaged by the Bishops of Canada to develop the reporting system according to the instructions and procedures outlined in *Vos estis lux mundi*. This new reporting system is designed to receive and transmit to the proper Church authorities reports of sexual

abuse, sexual misconduct (e.g., sexual harassment or possession of child pornography) or cover-up by a Catholic Bishop. ClearView's technology benefits anyone wanting to make such a report by providing them with a secure and confidential platform, allowing them to remain anonymous if they so choose, and ensuring all communications are documented and preserved.

The Catholic Bishops of Canada condemn the sin and crime of sexual abuse in the strongest possible terms. No one should ever have to endure the pain, humiliation, and long-term suffering it causes, nor should anyone have to doubt that serious consequences await a perpetrator of sexual abuse or cover-up. With this reporting system, the Bishops make themselves accountable to live with integrity and to address reports of sexual abuse according to Church and civil law. At all times, they grieve with victims-survivors. They regret profoundly what offending Bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity have inflicted on victims-survivors, as well as its effects. The Bishops of Canada wish to reach out and accompany victims-survivors along the path that restores justice and promotes healing.

About Canadian Reporting System for Sexual Abuse or Cover-up by a Catholic Bishop

The *Canadian Reporting System for Sexual Abuse or Cover-up by a Catholic Bishop* is provided and financed by the Bishops of Canada. It operates on a confidential, secure platform, ClearView Connects™, developed by ClearView Strategic Partners. Individuals can access the reporting system online (BishopReportingSystem.ca) or via a toll-free number (1-866-892-3737) from anywhere in Canada, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year in English or French.

To learn more about the *Canadian Reporting System for Sexual Abuse or Cover-up by a Catholic Bishop*, please visit www.halifaxyarmouth.org and click on the Responsible Ministry tab under Admin Services.

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