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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors will hold a Plenary Assembly at the *Palazzo Maffei-Marescotti, Via della Pigna*, Rome, May 3-6, 2023. This is the second Plenary Assembly since the new Commission was announced in September 2022.

A goal of the meeting is to review the first six months of the new Commission and its work of implementing its new mandate contained in the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* article 78 as well as instructions to the Commission during the Audience of April 29, 2022.

The Commission will begin with the celebration of mass on May 3rd in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, located Piazza della Pigna and connected to Commission's new office space in the Palazzo Maffei Marescotti. After an open discussion on how to better define working methods, roles and responsibilities, the Commission will review a Universal Guidelines Framework (PE article 78.2), that updates the one issued by the then-Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2011 designed to assist Bishops Conferences in developing *Guidelines* for dealing with cases of sexual abuses of minors perpetrated by clerics.

In addition, the Commission will review a proposed audit tool, also requested by the Holy Father, to be used in conjunction with the *Guidelines* to ensure they are achieving their purpose.

Two other main agenda items include a review of the Commission's outreach and assistance to those Bishops' Conferences that need capacity to implement reporting

procedures for those who have experienced sexual abuse and as indicated in the *Motu Proprio Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, article 2. The Commission's assistance in ensuring the existence of offices or other suitable entities at the level of each particular church was requested by the Holy Father. The third major agenda item will review developments in the methodology and contents of the *Annual Report on Safeguarding Policies and Procedures*, also requested by the Holy Father.

The Plenary Assembly will review a 5-year Strategic Plan for the Commission as well as a public consultation campaign on the proposed Universal Guidelines Framework May-September 2023 through which the Commission will seek feedback and input from those impacted by its work.

Other developments include updates on the working relationship with the Roman Curia, program development in victim accompaniment and formation in the new Commission's offices at the Palazzo Maffei as well as fundraising efforts around capacity building to ensure implementation of VELM 2 as well as a Protocol on the disbursement of Funds.

In February 2023, the Commission filled a series of new staff positions to help implement its expanded mandate. This was made possible with the funding from a US Catholic Foundation that has supported other areas of the Vatican's work. These "Global Resource Staff" are a group of safeguarding professionals who have been contracted on a full- and part-time basis to assist the work of the Commission. They will be located within the particular churches. Commission staff met for a working session to prepare for the Plenary Assembly also in the Palazzo Maffei-Marescotti, April 27-29th.

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