

Vatican, 23 June, 2023.

**Embargo 12:00**

## The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors launches global consultation on updated Guidelines to prevent sexual abuse in the Church

*The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors announces the global launch of a period of public consultation on a proposed updated Universal Guidelines Framework to strengthen efforts at creating a safe environment for children and vulnerable persons throughout the Church.*

### Updated Universal Guidelines Framework (UGF)

The Universal Guidelines Framework (UGF) approved for distribution by the Pontifical Commission during its recent Plenary Assembly, serves as a model to define the safeguarding standards to be implemented in every local church across the world.

The function of these principles is to promote protection from abuse in the Church according to existing good practices in safeguarding, with a focus on assisting people impacted by abuse and the importance of dealing appropriately with instances of abuse.

Based on analysis of the work done throughout the Church and civil society over the past decade, the Commission identified a series of core principles that are designed to underpin local safeguarding guidelines and policies in each local church.

### A Period for Public Comment

In addition to distributing the UGF to the world's Bishop Conferences and the leaders of Religious Congregations and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Commission is launching a period of public comment, inviting people to participate in an online survey which will be available on the Commission's website.

It is available at <https://www.tutelaminorum.org/universal-guidelines-framework/>

The survey is available in four languages and is accompanied by a series of *Frequently Asked Questions*. The Commission is inviting feedback aware that, as Pope Francis has said: "This duty of care and protection devolves upon the whole Church." (Apostolic Letter, *Motu Proprio, Come una Madre Amorevole*, 2016).

The responses will be reviewed, collated, and incorporated into a final UGF for evaluation and approval by the Commission towards the end of 2023. It will then be distributed in its final form to all local churches around the world asking them to update their current *Safeguarding Guidelines* and submit them for review by the Commission.

The process of establishing safeguarding guidelines throughout the Church was first undertaken in 2011 and was led by the then-Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

With the promulgation of the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, Article 78.2 assigned competence within the Curia over *Safeguarding Guidelines* to the Commission.

The new Universal Guidelines Framework will require local churches to provide systems for receiving and managing accusations of abuse and for supporting all those affected especially victims and survivors according to requirements of the Holy Father's instruction, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*.

Other requirements include: accompaniment of those impacted by abuse and the communities affected, cultural competence in ensuing safe environments throughout the Church, publicly accessible procedures, a stated commitment to safeguarding and accountable mechanisms for church leadership, risk prevention measures, and pastoral conversion towards a culture of safeguarding based on ongoing formation and training for all ministers in the Church.

## Building Capacity and Annual Report

In addition to leading the process of updating *Safeguarding Guidelines* throughout the Church, the Commission will assist those parts of the Church that may lack the financial or human resources to ensure practical implementation of these *Guidelines*. With the assistance of Church partner agencies, the Commission has established a capacity-building program, to ensure *Safeguarding Guidelines* are both developed and are implemented. This program is called "Memorare" in reference to the prayer to the Blessed Mother that "no-one is left unaided." More information is available at

<https://www.tutelaminorum.org/knowledgebase/plenary-assembly-3-6-may-2023/>

The progress of renewing *Safeguarding Guidelines* as well as building up capacity throughout the Church will be presented in the *Annual Report on Safeguarding Policies and Procedures*, requested by the Holy Father in an audience to the Commission in April 2022. An initial blueprint of the *Annual Report* will be released in October 2023. The first completed *Annual Report* containing "live data" from throughout the Church is scheduled for release in October 2024.

ENDS