



COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND HAWAII

ابروشية لوس أنجلوس، جنوب كاليفورنيا، وهاواي

Statement Regarding Sexual Misconduct

“The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Your Name will put their trust in You: For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You” (Ps 9:9, 10).

In the past several weeks, courageous voices in the Coptic community have shed light on instances of child sexual abuse by a now defrocked priest. Weeping with those who weep (Ro 12:15), we are saddened and heartbroken by his inexcusable misconduct. While our Diocese has always had a **zero tolerance policy** regarding sexual misconduct, we believe it is important to re-examine our current policy and practices to do even more in light of these recent revelations:

- A diverse team of clergy and laity (men and women) has been conducting a comprehensive review and update of our *Policy, Principles, and Standards regarding Sexual Misconduct*, including a review of the policies of the Roman Catholic Church and other Orthodox churches to ensure we adopt the current best practices. The updated policy will soon be made publicly available through the Diocese website.
- All clergy and Diocese employees will be required to undergo mandatory training on the Policy and related protocols, including training on state-mandated reporting.
- All current and future servants of the Diocese will be required to undergo mandatory training on the Policy as part of our established Diocese Servants’ Certification program before they are permitted to serve.
- A diverse committee of clergy and laity (men and women, including therapists) has been working on protocols regarding investigation and reporting, as well as counseling.

We will continue to investigate any allegation of sexual abuse thoroughly and take appropriate action swiftly, including but not limited to, complying with mandated state reporting requirements and imposing appropriate ecclesiastical and pastoral consequences.

Our goal is to take real and transparent action to ensure there are no more victims with the grace of God. To those who have already been victimized by individuals who abused their position of trust, we pray with you, knowing that the Lord will not abandon you as the Holy Prophet said: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God” (Is 43:2).

As we begin the Fast of the Holy Virgin Mary, the icon of purity and grace, we call upon all clergy and children of the Diocese to ask for her intercessions and dedicate their fasting and prayer for the healing of the wounded, justice for survivors, repentance for wrongdoers, and peace and unity for our beloved Coptic Orthodox Church.

His Eminence
Metropolitan Serapion

His Grace
Bishop Suriel

His Grace
Bishop Abraham

His Grace
Bishop Kyrillos