



PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE  
**PROTECTION OF MINORS**

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**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Attn: News desks and Religious Affairs Correspondents*

(15 February 2016) Vatican City State - Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM Cap., President of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, together with all the Commission Members, issued today the following statement on the obligation to report suspected sexual abuse to civil authorities:

*“As Pope Francis has so clearly stated: ‘The crimes and sins of the sexual abuse of children must not be kept secret for any longer. I pledge the zealous vigilance of the Church to protect children and the promise of accountability for all’ (27 September 2015). We, the President and the Members of the Commission, wish to affirm that our obligations under civil law must certainly be followed, but even beyond these civil requirements, we all have a moral and ethical responsibility to report suspected abuse to the civil authorities who are charged with protecting our society.”*

Cardinal O'Malley's statement continued:

*“In the United States, our Bishops' Charter clearly states the obligation that all dioceses/eparchies and personnel report suspected abuse to the public authorities. Every year at our November meeting, at a training session for new Bishops, this obligation is reaffirmed, and every other February the Conference runs a second training program for new Bishops which also clearly and explicitly includes this obligation. As the Holy Father's advisory commission for the protection of minors, we recently shared with Pope Francis an overview of the Commission's extensive education efforts in local Churches over the past two years and reiterated the Members' willingness to provide this material at courses offered in Rome, including to the annual*

training program for new bishops and to the offices of the Roman Curia for their use in their own child protection efforts.”

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors was created by Pope Francis in March of 2014. The Chirograph of His Holiness Pope Francis states specifically:

*“The Commission’s specific task is to propose to me the most opportune initiatives for protecting minors and vulnerable adults, in order that we may do everything possible to ensure that crimes such as those which have occurred are no longer repeated in the Church. The Commission is to promote local responsibility in the particular Churches, uniting their efforts to those of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the protection of all children and vulnerable adults.”*

*The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors was created by Pope Francis in March of 2014 to propose the most opportune initiatives for the protection of all minors and vulnerable adults and to promote local responsibility in the particular Churches.*

*For more information on the work of the Pontifical Commission visit our website at [www.protectionofminors.va](http://www.protectionofminors.va)*