



Joint Statement of the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese in New Jersey and the Diocese of New York and New England on Sexual Misconduct

July 22, 2020

With allegations of sexual misconduct recently coming to light, we recall the words of St. Paul saying, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26). We condemn the cruelty of any and all sexual misconduct. The betrayal of trust and abuse of authority by any member of the clergy or servant within our churches is, without exception, unacceptable and abhorrent to the teachings of our Christian faith. We bitterly regret any harm inflicted on our daughters, sons, or their families.

The Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese in New Jersey and the Diocese of New York and New England (“Archdiocese and Diocese”) will not tolerate sexual misconduct of any kind, including sexual abuse of minors by any of our clergy, employees or servants. If anyone is aware of any suspected incident of sexual abuse of a minor by any such person, we urge you to immediately report to law enforcement and also to your Regional Vicar, whose contact information may be accessed through your parish priest.

We pledge our best efforts to prevent any such conduct, to immediately report allegations of such conduct to law enforcement, to promptly investigate such allegations, and to take appropriate action.

To honor this pledge, the Archdiocese and Diocese will continue to act in accordance with our *Sexual Misconduct Policies*. We urge all our clergy, employees and servants to review and comply with those Policies. We also urge them to thoughtfully apply our *Guidelines on Interactions with Children and Young People*. These Guidelines offer direction on how best to interact with children. We are bound by the words of Christ Himself who said, “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 18:10).

Our Policies and Guidelines have been distributed to our clergy and will be made available online to our employees and our servants who interact regularly with minors.

To those who have suffered, we hear you. We stand by you. We pray for you in the words of Psalms 147:3, for the Lord “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” May the Helper, the Holy Spirit through the Church, the Bride of Christ, provide comfort to those afflicted and provide healing and restoration to us all.