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## THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER PROMISES:

- *To listen with compassion and understanding.*
- *To provide you with names of advocates, support groups, counselors and individual therapists.*
- *To give you help with spiritual questions and spiritual guidance.*
- *To protect your privacy.*

We understand that coming forward with a complaint might be difficult and even frightening. We sincerely want to ease your pain and help you find healing. We'll also provide a link to non-diocesan people who can help you.

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## YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS ALONE.

Victims of abuse should always report to the civil authorities. To report a case of possible sexual abuse and to receive help and guidance from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, victims are encouraged to contact the victims' assistance coordinator:

### **Deborah Housel**

Phone: (585) 328-3228, ext. 1555  
Toll-free: (800) 388-7177, ext. 1555  
E-mail: [victimsassistance@dor.org](mailto:victimsassistance@dor.org)

**HELP  
FOR  
VICTIMS  
OF  
SEXUAL  
ABUSE**



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

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# A Message from Bishop Salvatore R. Matano

*The damage caused by sexual abuse of minors [by priests or other church personnel] is devastating and long-lasting. We reach out to those who suffer, but especially to the victims of sexual abuse and their families. We apologize to them for the grave harm that has been inflicted upon them, and we offer them our help for the future. In the light of so much suffering, healing and reconciliation are beyond human capacity alone. Only God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness can lead us forward, trusting Christ's promise: "for God all things are possible" (Gospel of Matthew 19:26).*

*– From the Preamble, United States Catholic Bishops, June 2002  
"Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People"*

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The issue of sexual abuse of children by clergy and others in our Church has caused much pain, alienation from the Church, hardship and understandable anger. I join with our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and my brother bishops throughout the world in expressing deep sorrow for this tragedy. As the Shepherd of this Diocese, I will continue to work unceasingly to ensure that our parishes, schools and every entity connected to our Diocese are safe and holy environments for all.

Our Diocese, for decades now, has worked diligently to protect all people, most especially our children, young people and vulnerable adults. Among the steps taken have been the establishment of an independent Review Board of professionals from our community to advise the Bishop in cases in which sexual abuse is alleged; mandatory criminal background checks and abuse-prevention training for more than 25,000 clerics, educators, employees and volunteers through our Creating a Safe Environment program; education programs in our schools; codes of conduct; and our Safe and Sacred program aimed at conducting re-training at regular intervals.

As Bishop of Rochester, I pledge to continue these initiatives and I remain committed to the guiding principles established in the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted in 2002.



These are:

- To respond promptly to all allegations of sexual abuse where there is reasonable belief that abuse has occurred;
- To remove ministerial privileges from the alleged offender promptly and refer him for appropriate medical evaluation and intervention if such an allegation is supported by sufficient evidence;
- To comply with the obligations of civil law for reporting an incident and cooperating with any official investigation;
- To reach out to the victims and their families, and communicate sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being;
- And to deal as openly as possible with the members of the community within the confines of respect for privacy of all the individuals involved.

It is my fervent prayer that any person who has been harmed by a person in a position of trust and authority within our Church will find the spiritual and emotional healing they deserve. To that end, I encourage those who were victimized to please contact our victims' advocacy office where, I know, you will be received as a son or daughter of God.

Assuring you of my prayer and asking a remembrance in your good prayers, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Salvatore R. Matano*

The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester