



**THE REFORMED OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH
CLERGY/RELIGIOUS MISCONDUCT POLICY
ZERO TOLERANCE**

As a church, we are constantly aware of events in Scotland UK and overseas that have made it absolutely necessary for credible faith communities to publish a policy that makes it clear for all members of the community, clergy and faithful alike, that ZERO tolerance is the only acceptable standard for issues of inappropriate misconduct by the clergy and religious. This church will NOT allow sex offenders to remain active clergy or religious brothers or sisters.

We have adopted therefore, a working policy of *The Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC)* regarding sexual misconduct of clergy, religious, employees, regular volunteers, seminarians, and candidates for ordination and/or incardination.

Our position on clergy abuse is therefore as follows:

Those who have been convicted of a felony or sex crime are not eligible for Holy Orders.

- If it is determined that a member of the clergy or of a religious order has been convicted of a felony or sex crime, that person will be automatically removed from the clerical state or religious order and returned to lay status after the Judicial Vicar has made recommendations to the Bishop.
- The Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC) has adopted a zero tolerance policy for any physical misconduct by its clergy, a member of a religious order of the church, and/or anyone working in any capacity, either in paid employment or in a voluntary capacity with the Church.
- Included is unwanted, inappropriate physical contact with parishioners, those being counseled, those receiving the sacraments, and most especially minors, disabled, geriatric adults or anyone who may be considered at risk. In instances where allegations are made and/or a civil arrest has been made, the Presiding Bishop shall immediately suspend faculties and privileges as clergy or religious until an official investigation has been carried out by both church and civil authorities.

- Inappropriate and unwanted physical activity with minors, disabled, geriatric or other vulnerable individuals will be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement authority and investigated by them. The Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC) will cooperate with civil authorities as they investigate the allegations made. In instances where allegations have been made and an arrest is forthcoming or has been made, the Presiding Bishop shall immediately suspend all rights, faculties and privileges as clergy or religious, until an investigation has been completed by church and civil authorities.
- Furthermore, inappropriate and unsolicited physical contact with any individual with whom a member of the clergy or a religious order has a relationship of personal care of any kind, will result in immediate suspension of ecclesiastical or religious faculties. This means that all faculties and the authority to celebrate the Sacraments of the Church will be removed with immediate effect, with a referral for medical/psychiatric treatment of the offending person if found guilty. If the person is cleared of all charges by both church and civil law, all faculties and authority to celebrate the Sacraments of the Church will be restored and all records marked as "cleared." If the person is found and proven guilty their suspension will become permanent and they will be deposed from the ministry of the Church or their religious order.
- Every effort must be made by The Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC) to be fair and balanced in its treatment of those who have been accused of misconduct, giving them the opportunity to defend themselves to the judicial vicariate of the church, and to seek assistance in obtaining professional help, to include medical or psychological professionals. This requirement does not preclude the church's responsibility to inform the civil authorities of allegations of misconduct. Officials or employees who do not follow the zero tolerance policy of the church are subject to immediate dismissal and revocation of their faculties and benefits.
- Those found, after investigation by Church authorities and law enforcement agencies, to have deliberately and inaccurately accused one of the clergy for the purposes of obtaining financial reward in order to punish, humiliate, address or redress issues, will be held responsible for such allegations and accusations to civil and criminal juridical authorities. In that unfortunate circumstance, the clergy or religious are free to seek personal and public redress for the injury to their reputation and good standing within the Church. Most of all, it is essential that forgiveness and healing must be the guiding light through forgiveness in such cases, and all parties are encouraged to seek counseling and help in rebuilding their lives.
- In all cases The Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC) shall provide effective pastoral care to those who have been victimized.
- In all circumstances the church will maintain a position of absolute transparency in all matters of investigation into allegations of abuse/misconduct. The people of God deserve nothing less.
- All violations of this policy shall be reported to the bishop or apostolic administrator in each diocese.

This statement is approved and confirmed for immediate use and distribution within the Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC)

*Given under our hand and seal, this 14th day of September,
in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

*The Most Rev Andrew Hall OSFS ATh Dip Counsel
Presiding Bishop / Archbishop of the Reformed Old Catholic Church*

Notice: This policy is under constant review in accordance with both the laws in Scotland and any changes to this policy will be posted immediately upon approval by the Presiding Bishop.