

## Safe Environment Committee

To the Reader,

In response to D.54.2.2 that all monasteries of the Congregation have a policy on sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in accordance with the norms of the Church, this committee has been established by the Abbot President to assist our monasteries achieve this goal. In particular, the authentic interpretation (D.115.1) of this norm includes accreditation by Praesidium Inc., a Texas based firm that assists a wide-range of secular and ecclesial youth-serving organizations in this regard. The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) engaged Praesidium in 2003 to develop a set of standards proper to religious life. Those standards became effective in 2004 with *Instruments of Hope and Healing* and have subsequently been reviewed and further developed to meet changing needs. From the beginning of the program, CMSM also engaged Praesidium to audit compliance to these norms (accreditation). This third-party independent audit is essential for the credibility of all our public ecclesial ministries.

This specific folder provides numerous resources for those responsible for developing and maintaining safe environment policies in our monasteries, including:

1. ***Praesidium Standards 2016, red-line edition.*** This will help those monasteries that have already been accredited by Praesidium update their policies to meet the changes approved in 2016 by the CMSM national board (highlighted in red). In addition, there is a chart delineating the 2016 changes, standard by standard, requirement by requirement.
2. Monasteries that have policies but have not yet been accredited as well as monasteries that to date have not yet developed a policy, will find the above set of 25 standards essential. In addition, the Praesidium website has examples for the implementation of each and every standard and their respective requirements. The website is password protected; the general CMSM password for the site is "accreditation". Go to the website: <https://website.praesidiuminc.com/wp/>. Then scroll down and click on "Catholic". Then further click on "Catholic Men's Religious Accreditation" to access these numerous resources.
3. Whether you are seeking initial accreditation or re-accreditation, the "self-audit toolkit" included in the above website resources is invaluable. You can audit yourself before the on-site visit from Praesidium. This will give you the assurance that you are ready for the on-site visit by Praesidium and will, in act, be accredited.
4. Part of every policy is the establishment of a review board, as required by the *Essential Norms* of the USCCB. You can join an existing regional CMSM review board or form your own. Sample polices for review boards are also available on the website.

5. Three monasteries have shared their policies to assist others, especially those seeking initial accreditation. Herein you will find the following:
  - a. Newark Abbey, recently accredited under the 2016 standards
  - b. St. Mary's Abbey, recently updated to meet the 2016 standards; it also includes policies on sexual exploitation of adults in pastoral ministry and sexual harassment of lay employees. This is not required for accreditation but demonstrates how some monasteries have used this Praesidium model to address other sexual ethics issues.
  - c. St. Vincent Archabbey, last revised in 2015 (ie prior to changes in 2016) but a good policy nonetheless.
6. The members of the Congregation's safe environment committee are available and willing to assist monasteries in seeking initial accreditation or re-accreditation in the development of policies, training of members and the establishment and training of review boards. In addition, the Congregation can offer financial assistance to those monasteries in need to such aid in order to obtain accreditation.
7. The members of this committee are...
  - a. Abbot Elias Lorenzo, Morristown (chairman) [president@amcass.org](mailto:president@amcass.org)
  - b. Father Roman Paur, Collegeville [FCLR@CSBSJU.EDU](mailto:FCLR@CSBSJU.EDU)
  - c. Mr. Jack Perry, Latrobe [jack.perry@stvincent.edu](mailto:jack.perry@stvincent.edu)