

Contact:  
**Penny Wiegert**  
Director of Communication  
pwiegert@rockforddiocese.org  
Phone: (815) 399-4300  
Fax: (815)399-6225

555 Colman Center Drive  
P.O. Box 7044  
Rockford, IL 61125  
www.rockforddiocese.org



**DIOCESE OF  
ROCKFORD**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2018

# PRESS RELEASE

## STATEMENT FROM THE DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD REGARDING LAWSUIT FILED BY JEFF ANDERSON

The Diocese of Rockford, along with the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Dioceses of Belleville, Joliet, Peoria, and Springfield are currently in full cooperation with the State Attorney General's office inquiry into each diocese's handling of childhood sex abuse claims against clergy.

So as to a response to the lawsuit announced and filed this morning by Mr. Jeff Anderson, there will need to be further review of what this lawsuit seeks to accomplish beyond that of the State's Attorney General.

For decades, the Diocese of Rockford has had in place codes of conduct for its priests and diocesan employees, as well as procedures for responsibly responding to allegations of sexual abuse. In 2002 the Rockford Diocese implemented additional policies and procedures in light of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that year.

Every priest, employee and volunteer who comes in contact with children in the Rockford Diocese or its parishes and schools, must undergo a criminal background check and complete training in our Safe Environment programs in order to prevent, detect, and report abuse of any kind by any person. Students in both our Catholic Schools and our religious education programs are trained with age appropriate materials to identify, avoid and report abuse. The Diocese of Rockford prohibits any priest with a credible accusation of abuse against a minor or vulnerable adult from functioning as a priest or engaging in ministry.

Also since 1987, the Diocese has formally provided assistance to victims of sexual abuse unconditionally.

While allegations in the Rockford Diocese are rare, we remain vigilant in regularly reviewing and updating our policies and encouraging victims of abuse to come forward and report the abuse to law enforcement authorities in the county where the abuse occurred, and to contact the Diocesan Abuse hotline at 815-293-7540 or [reportsexualabuse@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:reportsexualabuse@rockforddiocese.org) for victim assistance.

The Diocese of Rockford enforces these policies because our first priority is and will always be to provide safe environments in which the people of God can serve and be served especially our young people.