

## ***Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon***

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Transcript of Video Update, Nov. 15, 2019:

### **“Involvement of the Laity in Creating Safe Church Environments and Responding to Abuse”**

*Brenda Fitzgerald, Chair, Diocesan Committee for the Covenant of Care and Serious Misconduct Protocol*

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon is committed to providing safe and respectful and healthy church communities and to protecting people from abuse and the harm that results from abuse

To help ensure this, the diocese has put in place a **Diocesan Committee on the Covenant of Care**. This committee helps to establish policies and procedures, and also helps to ensure that the policies and procedures are regularly updated.

These policies and protocols or procedure have been created to ensure that there are safe environments for children, youth and vulnerable adults; and also for those who minister, including clergy, and employees and volunteers.

Policy and protocol documents such as such the **Covenant of Care policy** and the investigation of **Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol** are available on the diocesan website and we welcome you to take a look at them (*found at: <https://rcdos.ca/covenant-of-care>*).

The **Diocesan Committee on the Covenant of Care** is made up of members of the church community from all walks of life – people just like you and me: a farmer, a social worker, a counsellor, a person with experience fostering foster children, a lawyer, a person who themselves have suffered abuse.

In June 2019, the Diocesan Committee completed a comprehensive review of the diocese’s policies and protocols to ensure that they were current and more focused on creating safe church environments. Also, more emphasis was placed

on creating sensitive processes to assist and support people coming forward with any allegation of serious misconduct.

The policies were also reviewed to ensure that the recommendations from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops 2018 document on Protecting Minors From Sexual Abuse were incorporated (*find the CCCB document at: [https://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Protecting\\_Minors\\_2018.pdf](https://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Protecting_Minors_2018.pdf)*).

Members of the Diocesan Committee were really pleased to see that the advice they provided on how to strengthen the policies and protocols were incorporated. They were particularly pleased to see that a clear, transparent process for reporting abuse and for establishing requirements to respond quickly and directly to allegations of serious misconduct were included -- as well as a commitment to provide support and professional resources for those coming forward as they journey through the through the process and follow-up.

And now, of course, the work continues.

We will work together as members of our church communities to ensure that policies and protocols are lived, that they are implemented, and not just words in a binder on a shelf or on a website.