

## **Allegation Review Process**

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Committee or its designee will conduct a preliminary investigation to assess whether there is probable cause for a complaint of sexual abuse. When there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the Vatican Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith shall be notified. The bishop shall then apply precautionary measures.

Upon completion of the investigation by civil investigative authorities, or earlier, at the discretion of the chair, the Committee shall gather necessary information and conduct a hearing to determine whether sufficient evidence supports the allegation of sexual abuse. The Committee shall strive to make a prompt but complete determination. The victim and alleged offender may be represented by civil and/or canonical counsel at the hearing. The parties shall be given the opportunity to present evidence and respond to any information provided to the Committee. The Committee shall make written findings which shall be communicated to the bishop. If the Committee determines that the accused has committed sexual abuse, the Committee shall recommend that the bishop remove the priest or deacon permanently from ministry. If the Committee determines that the allegation is not supported by sufficient evidence, the bishop may return the accused to ministry and take steps to restore the good name of the minister.