



The Bishop Readiness Resource



0-3 Months

Newly Installed Diocesan/Eparchial Bishop

- Comply with the diocesan/eparchial requirements for a **background check** ([Charter, Article 13](#), [A Statement of Episcopal Commitment 2](#)).
- Comply with diocesan/eparchial requirements for **safe environment training** ([Charter, Article 12](#)).
- Review diocesan/eparchial **policies and procedures** related to child and youth protection and codes of ministerial conduct ([Charter Articles 2, 6](#), [Essential Norms Norm 2](#), [Affirming Our Episcopal Commitments 5, 6](#)).
- Be apprised of all **State-mandated reporting laws** and review diocesan/eparchial policy on making reports ([Charter Article 4](#), [Essential Norms Norm 11](#), [Vos estis lux mundi Article 19](#), [Directives for the Implementation of the Provisions of Vos estis lux mundi Concerning Bishops and Their Equivalents 2](#)).
- Meet with **Child and Youth Protection staff**-director, victim assistance coordinator, safe environment coordinator and, if applicable, the designated qualified lay person for receiving complaints against bishops:
 - Review steps to be taken when a new allegation is received.
 - Review policies and procedures, including at what point the diocesan/eparchial bishop is notified. ([Charter Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5](#), [Essential Norms 2, 3, 6, 7](#), [Directives 1](#)).
- Learn about any **cases or issues** relating to the abuse of minors/vulnerable adults in the diocese/eparchy, especially those that are:
 - (1) outstanding and unresolved; (2) resolved but undisclosed; (3) resolved and the cleric has been returned to ministry; (4) resolved and the cleric is still alive; (5) resolved but is of such notoriety that the bishop should be aware, even if the cleric is deceased ([Charter Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14](#), [Essential Norms 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12](#)).
- Meet with key staff, including **chancellor, judicial vicar, promoter of justice, and vicar for clergy**:
 - Review any precautionary measures that have been placed on incardinated priests of the diocese or eparchy.
 - Learn about existing accusations against incardinated priests and deacons of the diocese or eparchy currently under investigation.
 - Learn about any cases involving *graviora delicta* that are pending before the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
 - Learn about any incardinated priests of the diocese or eparchy who are assigned to live a life of prayer and penance. Some possible questions to ask: Are safety plans in place? What are the terms? Are the priests compliant? Who is responsible for oversight? ([Charter Articles 2, 4, 5, 7, 14](#), [Essential Norms 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12](#), [A Statement of Episcopal Commitment 3](#)).

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- Meet with ancillary staff, including **diocesan/eparchial attorney** regarding active civil cases, **communications director** regarding working with news media or parish notices/announcements and **superintendent of schools** regarding school specific protocols ([Charter Articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 7](#), [Essential Norms 11](#), [A Statement of Episcopal Commitment 3](#), [Affirming 3](#)).
- Reach out to **victim survivors** of clerical sexual abuse, their families, the communities where the clerics last served, and victim survivor advocacy groups within the diocese/eparchy ([Charter Articles 1, 2](#), [Essential Norms 3](#), [Affirming 1](#), [Directives 4](#)).
- Meet with **Review Board Chair**. (See 3-6 months check list for full details).
 - Assess how the diocese/eparchy is meeting its child protection obligations.
 - Assess how well the board is functioning.
 - Determine if the board has the support it needs.
 - Inquire about what the diocese/eparchy can do to make the board's work more effective ([Charter Article 2](#), [Essential Norms 4, 5](#)).

Reference Documents for All Bishops

1. [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People \(2018\)](#)
2. [Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons \(2006\)](#)
3. [A Statement of Episcopal Commitment \(2018\)](#)
4. [Motu Proprio Vos estis lux mundi \(2019\)](#)
5. [Directives for the Implementation of the Provisions of Vos estis lux mundi Concerning Bishops and Their Equivalents \(2019\)](#)
6. [Affirming Our Episcopal Commitments \(2019\)](#)

*The *Charter*, *Essential Norms*, and *Statement of Episcopal Commitment* are contained in the same pdf. Please scroll down within the document to view.

**Directives for the Implementation of the Provisions of Vos estis lux mundi Concerning Bishops and Their Equivalents* is contained in *A Continuous and Profound Conversion of Hearts* please scroll down to view the *Directives* document in the pdf.



The Bishop Readiness Resource

3-6 Months



Newly Installed Diocesan/Eparchial Bishop

- Sign a promulgation statement approving the **youth training** program ([Charter, Article 12](#)).
- Sign a promulgation statement approving the **adult training** program ([Charter, Article 12](#)).
- Meet with priestly and diaconal **formation staff**, including vocations director, diaconate director, and ongoing formation director to review programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy ([Charter Article 17](#)).
- Arrange to meet, either personally or through a delegate, with **major superiors** or representatives of the clerical religious institutes and societies of apostolic life present within the diocese or eparchy. This is to be done periodically (typically at least once annually). Issues to address include:
 - Coordinating roles for handling allegations against a cleric of the institutes or societies ministering in the diocese or eparchy.
 - Ensuring that the institutes or societies have current protocols in place.
 - Determining if the institutes or societies have received accreditation from any organization (e.g. Praesidium).
 - Determining if the institutes or societies actively comply with CMSM recommendations.
 - Determining if the safeguarding requirements of sponsored institutions are consistent with diocesan/eparchial policies.
 - Determining if any religious or society clerics assigned to live a life of prayer and penance are residing within the diocese/eparchy ([Charter Article 15](#)).
- Meet with the Diocesan/Eparchial **Review Board**.
 - Clarify your expectations of the board.
 - Discuss how this consultative structure can be most helpful to you:
 - In assessing allegations of the sexual abuse of minors.
 - For determining a cleric's suitability for ministry.
 - In reviewing diocesan/eparchial policies and procedures related to the sexual abuse of minors.
 - Review membership terms and qualifications of board members.
 - Fill existing membership vacancies.
 - Be sure the board meets regularly (preferably one time annually and more frequently if needed).
 - Decide if you would like to be present at meetings. If so, under what circumstances can you be asked to leave the meeting ([Charter Article 10, Essential Norms 4, 5](#)).



The Bishop Readiness Resource

6-9 Months



Newly Installed Diocesan/Eparchial Bishop

- Review diocesan/eparchial **records management and retention policies**.
 - Are they being followed?
 - Are clergy files being updated regularly?
 - Are there any senior staff who keep private files on clergy matters that are not included in the clergy file?
- Review diocesan/eparchial clergy **files of priests and deacons** incardinated in the diocese or eparchy who are active, retired, or on leave.
 - Are their background checks and trainings current?
 - Be aware of anything that may have been overlooked or not fully addressed, anything that might be a flag for potential problems ([Charter, Articles 12, 13](#)).
- If not conducted recently, consider reviewing the clergy files of all **deceased incardinated clerics** of the diocese or eparchy and those who were dispensed from the obligations of the clerical state.
 - Consider including a review of all files of seminarians who did not complete formation.



The Bishop Readiness Resource

9-12 Months



Newly Installed Diocesan/Eparchial Bishop

- Convene **key diocesan/eparchial staff** (e.g., chancellor, judicial vicar, vicar for clergy, safe environment coordinator, victim assistance coordinator, promoter of justice and, if applicable, the designated qualified lay person for receiving complaints against bishops):
 - Review the findings of the most recent annual audit for assessing diocesan/eparchial compliance with the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.”
 - Assess the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures for creating a safe environment.
 - Evaluate existing resources and personnel vis-à-vis the needs of the diocese or eparchy.
 - Identify experts who can be called upon to assist with future investigations or to serve on the diocesan/eparchial review board and the National Review Board
 - Explore topics for the ongoing formation of clergy and laity.
- Based on the consultations, determine a path forward to continue to promote safety, healing, and reconciliation within the diocese or eparchy.