

Canon for Safe Churches

ADOSC Diocesan Council – December 18, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm greetings to you all! Thank you for taking the time to consider the work that I and the other Canons are doing to further the mission of ADOSC!

As most of you know, my work for Safe Churches consists of two primary components:

1. Overseeing Child/Youth Protection Training in ADOSC:

- a. There is an Annual Rector's Compliance Report from each church, due on September 30. At this point, nearly all the required letters have been submitted, and I am working with the few remaining churches to get everyone in compliance.
- b. Compliance here requires that clergy, vestry members, and staff/volunteers who work with children regularly complete training through Praesidium videos every two years. We are currently paying for 2000 active "seats" with Praesidium, and we are pushing to get everyone trained. We are exploring how we might make this training component more convenient for our churches, and that includes using our current strategy of encouraging video training while making in-person training available as needed.
- c. Another component of our Protection Training is working on improvements and additions to our ADOSC Child and Youth Protection Policy Manual. This is an ongoing project, and revisions to our manual will be forthcoming.

2. Receiving Complaints of Clergy/Staff/Laity Misconduct:

- a. This year, I have received and/or investigated complaints from our diocese, and also from Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, Diocese of the Carolinas, and the Diocese of Christ our Hope. I am also currently assisting the Province with a confidential investigation.

At first blush, that may sound like I am simply spread out all over the place, but the fact is this whole “safeguarding” initiative is new to the province, and we are slowly building a network of safeguarding investigators to work together when necessary.

For example, a few months ago I was in Charlotte for a week, assisting the Diocese of Christ our Hope with an investigation. They have had a working investigative team for several years, but they do not have any females on their team. Since this investigation involved a violent sex crime, they felt it would be important to have a female investigator on hand to speak with the victim and some witnesses. Their Bishop and their Canon for Safe Churches have assured me of their cooperation should I need their assistance with any future investigation here.

- b. Also, I regularly receive calls from churches in our diocese requesting guidance and clarification about how to address practical issues that arise in a church setting. We discuss the issue(s) by phone, and when necessary, I go to the church and meet with any of the involved parties, upon request.
- c. Currently, I have 4 open investigations – 1 in DOMA, one with the province, and 2 here. The complaints (mentioned above) I received for Diocese of the Carolinas were sent to their Safeguarding Director for follow-up, and the investigations I worked on with Christ our Hope are both complete.

Thank you for your continued prayers and for your support as this office continues to evolve and the responsibilities continue to grow. Churches must be the ultimate safe spaces!

Advent Blessings,
Laura+

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