For Parishioners:

Common Reactions to an Announcement of Sexual Abuse by Clergy

An ANNOUNCEMENT about child sexual abuse or boundary violations by clergy may create a feeling of crisis and trauma for parishioners. In addition to the pain felt by victims, individuals within our parishes are likely to have their own unique response to the news. Common reactions can include feelings of betrayal by a trusted leader, denial, disbelief, and embarrassment. When there is an allegation against someone who was in a trusted and sacred position, you may feel hurt, anger and disappointment. It is perfectly normal to have an emotional response which may create some unease for you.

RE-EXPERIENCING VICTIMIZATIONS OF THE PAST
We recognize that there may be individuals in our parishes who have been sexually abused or assaulted in childhood or as an adult, within or outside of a church setting. It is common that you may re-experience reactions and emotions related to that previous abuse. We encourage you to reach out for help.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP
The victim service staff at the Office for Child and Youth Protection are here to help. We can provide resources both within the Church and the secular community. We can be reached at 215.587.3880 or philavac@archphila.org.

If you do not feel comfortable contacting a resource affiliated with the Archdiocese, you can contact a victim service provider within your local community through this interactive Pennsylvania map. What is important is that you get the help and assistance you need.

If you are a Mandated Reporter and suspect abuse you are legally obligated to report your concerns. To report abuse in Pennsylvania Call ChildLine at 800-932-0313.