

Revised sex abuse norms at a glance

VATICAN CITY - The revised Vatican norms dealing with sexual abuse of minors by priests and other “more grave crimes” against church law contain several changes from the previous version published in 2001.

The main provisions of the revised norms:

- Extend the statute of limitations from 10 to 20 years after a sex abuse victim’s 18th birthday.
- Include use of child pornography as a type of sexual abuse of minors.
- Establish parity between abuse of mentally disabled people and that of minors.
- Confirm the right of the Vatican’s doctrinal congregation to ask the pope to laicize an abusive priest without a church trial, in the most serious and clear cases.
- Confirm that the doctrinal congregation can use an “extra-judicial” process to quickly remove an accused priest from active ministry.
- Confirm the practice of allowing qualified lay Catholics, and not only priests with doctorates in canon law, to serve on tribunals that deal with sex abuse cases.
- Confirm the doctrinal congregation’s competency to judge cardinals, patriarchs and bishops accused of “more grave crimes.”
- Lists “attempted sacred ordination of a woman” among the “more grave crimes” reserved to the doctrinal congregation.
- Makes it a grave crime to record confessions with modern technology.