

II Report of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors: Justice, Conversion, Reparation

November 17, 2025

On 16 October 2025, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors published the Second *Annual Report on the Church Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding*, which contains data on the fight against abuse of vulnerable people in the year 2024¹.

The body – established by Pope Francis with a chirograph of 22nd March 2014 and currently operating at the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, pursuant to article 78 of the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* – over the years, has carried out a long work of analysis of the practices adopted at the level of the universal Church and particular Churches to prevent and sanction abuse and to give back to victims a space to listen, a recognition of their dignity and support in the difficult process of inner healing².

At the beginning of the document, the President of the Pontifical Commission proposes "perpetual pilgrimage" as an image of the Church's mission in this sector, thus emphasizing the common journey that must be made both by ecclesiastical institutions and by the faithful involved in various capacities, in becoming neighbors of the "survivors".

The key words of the *Report* are "justice", "conversion" and "reparation", which in terms of concrete measures are expressed – in addition to the duty of financial compensation in favor of victims – in the provision of counseling centers, in the offer of psychological support, in the public recognition of responsibilities and in the request for apologies, in transparent communication to victims on the status

¹ The *Second Annual Report on Church Policies and Procedures – Reference Period 2024* has been published on the official website of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors in English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and French, together with a summary and some infographics for ease of reference. Cf. <https://www.tutelaminorum.org/annual-report/>; EDOARDO GIRIBALDI, *Tutela Minori: il secondo Rapporto propone misure riparative contro gli abusi*, in *Vatican News*, 16th October 2025, <https://www.vaticannews.va/it/vaticano/news/2025-10/commissione-tutela-minori-secondo-rapporto-politiche-chiesa.html>; ANDREA GAGLIARDUCCI, *Secondo Rapporto della Commissione per la Tutela dei Minori, focus su ascolto delle vittime e riparazione*, in *ACI Stampa*, 16th October 2025, <https://www.acistampa.com/story/31987/secondo-rapporto-della-commissione-per-la-tutela-dei-minori-focus-su-ascolto-delle-vittime-e-riparazione>; DAVIDE IMENEO, *Abusi e tutela dei minori: che cosa dice il rapporto del Vaticano*, in *Avvenire*, 16th October 2025, https://www.avvenire.it/chiesa/abusi-e-tutela-dei-minori-che-cosa-dice-il-rapporto-del-vaticano_98423; MARIA CIVES, *Il Rapporto 2025 della Pontificia Commissione per la Tutela dei Minori*, in *Vox Canonica*, 28th October 2025, <https://www.voxcanonica.com/2025/10/28/il-rapporto-2025-della-pontificia-commissione-per-la-tutela-dei-minori/>.

² For an overview of the measures adopted over the last few years in the fight against the abuse perpetrated by clerics against minors and vulnerable people, cf. GERARDO NUÑEZ, *La protección del menor de edad ante los abusos sexuales: su salvaguardia obtiene carta de naturaleza*, in *Ius Canonicum*, LXI, 122, 2021, pp. 821-862; DAVIDE CITO, *Abuso sui minori e diffusione della cultura della tutela e della prevenzione nella Chiesa*, in *Diritto e Religioni*, XVII, 1, 2022, pp. 293-302; ANNA GIANFREDA, *La salvaguardia dei minori e vulnerabili nella Chiesa: un approccio sistematico "in ascolto della realtà"*, in *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*, Rivista telematica (<https://www.statoechiese.it>), 22, 2022, pp. 31-51; PAOLO PALUMBO, *Tutela e protezione dei minori nella Chiesa cattolica: profili di diritto sostanziale e processuale alla luce delle recenti modifiche normative*, in *Il Diritto Processuale Civile Italiano e Comparato*, 1, 2023, pp. 277-307.

of the proceedings concerning their cases and in the participation of the victims in the improvement of protection standards³.

If we look at the structure of the publication, four sections should be highlighted: the first, more substantial, reports the account relating to the local Churches, belonging to eighteen episcopal conferences, including the Italian one, and to two religious institutes; the second takes into consideration the continental realities (Africa, Asia/Oceania, America, Europe); the third focuses on the Roman Curia and, in particular, the Dicastery for Evangelization; the fourth examines the Work of Mary – Focolare Movement, as an example of lay association. The appendix explains the financial situation of the Commission and gives news of *The Memorare Initiative*, with which the Bishops' Conferences, religious orders and philanthropic foundations can contribute to supporting the local Churches in the fulfilment of their obligations related to the protection of minors.

Given the complexity of the profiles and methodological approaches used, I will focus on sections one and three.

On the side of data collection at the diocesan level, the Commission, on the one hand, has supplemented the documentation required for the visit *ad limina* with a special questionnaire, and on the other, has strengthened control over the guidelines approved by the bishops' conferences.

The observation conducted on the CEI and on seven regional episcopal conferences (Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Sardinia, Lazio, Lombardy, Liguria, Sicily) is of particular interest: in fact, a varied picture emerges, marked by peaks of excellence in the implementation of good practices, in cooperation between institutions inside and outside the Church and in the involvement of qualified personnel, but also clouded by gray areas, which denote a lack of awareness, persistent blaming of victims and a lack of transparency in the management of cases⁴.

Among the recommendations, the Commission reiterated the invitation for Italian dioceses to make themselves available to share information with the competent dicasteries of the Holy See and to carry out constant monitoring of policies and procedures for the protection of minors; moreover, it has called for a greater commitment to facilitate complaints to the civil authorities, also with the intermediation of ecclesiastical structures, and to weave networks with associations engaged in the fight against abuse. Finally, the Commission emphasized the selection of candidates for Holy Orders and aspirants to consecrated life, so as to prevent the lack of vocations from leading to hasty and potentially prejudicial choices⁵.

³ Cfr. PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS, *Annual Report on Church Policies and Procedure for Safeguarding*, Vatican City, 2025, pp. 7-8, 25-31.

⁴Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 47-50.

⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

Even at the level of the Roman Curia, some critical issues are highlighted, one of which calls into question the motu proprio *Vos estis lux mundi*⁶. The plurality of jurisdictions that intersect in the pontifical provision would cause, according to the Dicastery for Evangelization, overlapping competences and confusion in the handling of complaints⁷. Moreover, at the moment of *plantatio Ecclesiae* and in the initial moments of the life of the new ecclesial circumscriptions, it would be difficult to demand standards of protection that are not even attained in territories of more deep-rooted Christian tradition; finally, there is a complaint about the scarcity of resources for the evaluation of candidates for the episcopate in mission lands.

The panorama that the *Report* presents to the reader, therefore, is constantly evolving: at the legislative level, reforms have strengthened repressive options and have put the spotlight on the obligations of transparency, collaboration and reparation; the bishops have gradually acquired elements to take effective decisions; the whole People of God have been called across the board to deal with the scourge of abuse. Nevertheless, as Benedict XVI has already pointed out, the urge to “to establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected, and above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes”⁸.

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⁶ The updated version of the motu proprio *Vos estis lux mundi* is published in AAS 115 (2023) 394-404. On the provision and its application, the doctrine has offered numerous contributions. Cf. RAFAEL RODRÍGUEZ-OCAÑA, *El motu proprio “Vos estis lux mundi”*, in *Ius Canonicum*, LIX, 118, 2019, pp. 825-884; GIUSEPPE COMOTTI, *I delitti contra sextum e l’obbligo di segnalazione nel motu proprio “Vos estis lux mundi”*, in *Ius Ecclesiae*, XXXIII, 1, 2020, pp. 239-268; ID., *Osservazioni sul secondo motu proprio “Vos estis lux mundi”* (25 marzo 2023), in FRANCESCA OLIOSI, *Diritto, religione, coscienza: il valore dell’equilibrio. Liber Amicorum per Erminia Camassa*, Mucchi Editore, Modena, 2023, pp. 191-219; GERALDINA BONI, *La recente attività normativa ecclesiastica: finis terrae per lo ius canonicum? Per una valorizzazione del ruolo del Pontificio Consiglio per i testi legislativi e della scienza giuridica nella Chiesa*, Mucchi Editore, Modena, 2021, pp. 129-167; ANTONIO INTERGUGLIELMI, *La collaborazione tra lo Stato e l’Autorità ecclesiastica nei casi di abuso su minori da parte di chierici*, in MARIA D’ARIENZO, MARIO FERRANTE, FABIANO DI PRIMA, *Diritto penale canonico e diritto penale statale: due ordinamenti a confronto alla luce della recente riforma del Libro VI del Codice di diritto canonico*, Monographic Book n. 3 *Diritto e Religioni*, Luigi Pellegrini, Cosenza, 2023, pp. 185-201; JOSÉ BERNAL, *Algunas ideas después de la reforma de “Vos estis lux mundi”*, in *Anuario de Derecho Canónico*, 14, 2024, pp. 49-64.

⁷ Cf. PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS, *Annual Report*, cit., p. 181.

⁸ BENEDICT XVI, *Pontifical Letter to the Catholics of Ireland*, 26th October 2006, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/speeches/2006/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20061028_ad-limina-ireland.html.