CONGREGATIO
PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

00120 Città del Vaticano,   3 May 2011
Palazzo del S. Uffizio

PROT. N.191/2010 – 35421

Your Eminence, Your Excellency,

As you are aware, on 21 May 2010, His Holiness, Benedict XVI promulgated a revised version of the *motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* containing norms concerning *delicta graviora*, including the sexual abuse of minors by members of the clergy.

In order to facilitate the correct application of these norms and other issues related to the abuse of minors, it seems opportune that each Episcopal Conference prepare Guidelines whose purpose will be to assist the Bishops of the Conference to follow clear and coordinated procedures in dealing with these instances of abuse. Such Guidelines would take into account the concrete situation of the jurisdictions within the Episcopal Conference..

To assist the Conferences of Bishops with the preparation of such Guidelines, or as an aid in reviewing those which already exist, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith has prepared the enclosed Circular Letter which contains general themes for the consideration of the Conference. This Circular Letter will remain under embargo until 12:00 PM in Rome on 16 May 2011, when it will be released by the Vatican Press Office.

It would also be helpful to involve the Major Superiors of clerical religious Institutes present in the territory of the Conference in the development of such Guidelines.

Finally, each Conference of Bishops is asked to send a copy of the completed Guidelines to the Congregation by the end of May 2012. This Dicastery remains at the disposal of your Episcopal Conference should there be any need for clarification or assistance in the preparation of such Guidelines. In the event that the Conference wishes to establish binding norms it will be necessary to request the appropriate *recognitio* from the competent Dicasteries of the Roman Curia.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

William Card. Levada

William Cardinal Levada
Prefect

-Enclosure-