



MANUEL DE JESÚS RODRÍGUEZ

By the Grace of God and of the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF PALM BEACH



No. 014-2026

DECREE

In the matter of:

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR OF THE DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

Whereas, the Diocesan Bishop is entrusted with the pastoral care, governance, and administration of the particular Church committed to him according to the norm of law (cf. cann. 381 §1; 391 §§1–2 CIC);

Whereas, the Church has a particular responsibility to receive with compassion, respect, and pastoral solicitude those who report having suffered sexual abuse or other forms of sexual misconduct by clergy, employees, volunteers, or other ecclesiastical agents, and to provide appropriate pastoral care and assistance to them and to their families;

Whereas, the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops calls for outreach to victims and survivors of sexual abuse and their families, and for each diocese to provide a competent person to coordinate assistance for their immediate pastoral care;

Whereas, by my Decree No. 010-2026, dated June 25, 2026, I established the Office for the Protection and Safeguarding of the People of God and provided that the Office of the Victim Assistance Coordinator shall operate under the supervision of the Chief Safeguarding Officer;



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Whereas, by the Particular Law *Protecting and Safeguarding the People of God*, promulgated on August 7, 2026, I instituted different codes of conduct, policies and protocols to ensure and guarantee the safety, adequate protection and common good of all members of the ecclesial community within the Diocese of Palm Beach;

Whereas, having considered the pastoral experience, professional preparation, personal qualifications, and demonstrated commitment to the protection and accompaniment of vulnerable persons of Ms. Anthuanette Hidalgo, I have judged her suitable to undertake this important responsibility in service to the People of God;

Therefore, after prayerful reflection and discernment, and exercising my lawful authority as Bishop of Palm Beach, I hereby DECREE the following:

1. Ms. Anthuanette Hidalgo is appointed Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Diocese of Palm Beach, effective Monday, August 31, 2026.
2. In the exercise of this responsibility, Ms. Hidalgo shall report to the Chief Safeguarding Officer of the Diocese of Palm Beach and shall faithfully observe the principles, criteria, requirements, and standards established by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, applicable civil and canonical law, and the particular laws, policies, protocols, and safeguarding regulations of the Diocese of Palm Beach.
3. The Victim Assistance Coordinator is hereby appointed ex officio member of the Bishop's Crisis Management Board (BCM) of the Diocese of Palm Beach. As such, she is bound to all the duties and rights proper to the members of said diocesan board.
4. The Victim Assistance Coordinator shall exercise her responsibilities with particular and primary concern for the interests, dignity, welfare, and pastoral needs of victims and survivors. Her ministry shall be centered upon compassionate reception, advocacy, accompaniment, and the provision and coordination of appropriate pastoral and professional assistance.
5. She shall endeavor to ensure that every victim or survivor who approaches the Diocese is treated with dignity, compassion, sensitivity, and respect and, insofar as reasonably possible, is provided continuing access to appropriate pastoral care, counseling, professional services, referrals, and other forms of assistance according to his or her particular circumstances and needs.
6. The Victim Assistance Coordinator shall serve as an advocate for victims and survivors in their interactions with the Diocese and shall assist them in understanding diocesan processes and accessing available resources. Such accompaniment shall not be limited to the initial reception of an allegation but shall seek to provide appropriate and continuing support throughout the relevant process and thereafter whenever pastoral circumstances reasonably warrant it.



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7. The Victim Assistance Coordinator shall not be responsible for determining the credibility of allegations, conducting canonical or civil investigations, adjudicating claims, or defending the institutional interests of the Diocese. Her distinctive responsibility shall remain the pastoral care, advocacy, accompaniment, and support of victims and survivors, without prejudice to the obligations imposed upon any person by civil law or diocesan policy concerning the reporting of suspected abuse to competent authorities.
8. In carrying out this ministry, she shall collaborate appropriately with the Chief Safeguarding Officer, the Office for the Protection and Safeguarding of the People of God, competent civil authorities and professional service providers, while maintaining the proper independence and integrity required for the effective advocacy and accompaniment of victims and survivors.
9. I direct all diocesan offices, parishes, schools, institutions, clergy, employees, and other ecclesiastical agents of the Diocese of Palm Beach to cooperate fully with the Victim Assistance Coordinator in the legitimate exercise of the responsibilities entrusted to her by this Decree.
10. This appointment shall remain in effect until otherwise provided according to the norm of law.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein. Issued and read, at the Office of the Diocesan Bishop, located at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Palm Beach, Palm Beach Gardens, State of Florida, on the twenty-ninth day of the month of August, in the Year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-six.

Very Rev. Antony Pulikal, V.E.
*Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia
and Episcopal Vicar for Strategic Planning*



Most Reverend Manuel de Jesús Rodríguez, J.C.D.
Bishop of Palm Beach

