

CHAPTER THREE

Audit Findings

TO PROMOTE HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WITH VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

ARTICLE I. Dioceses/eparchies are to reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victims is for healing and reconciliation. Each diocese/eparchy is to continue its outreach to every person who has been the victim of sexual abuse* as a minor by anyone in church service, whether the abuse was recent or occurred many years in the past. This outreach may include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the diocese/eparchy.

Through pastoral outreach to victims and their families, the diocesan/eparchial bishop or his representative is to offer to meet with them, to listen with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns, and to share the “profound sense of solidarity and concern” expressed by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers (April 23, 2002).

* In accord with *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 4 §1, sexual abuse, for purposes of this *Charter*, shall include any offense by a cleric against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with a minor as understood in the *Code of Canon Law*, c. 1395 §2 (“A cleric who in another way has committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, if the delict was committed by force or threats or publicly or with a minor below the age of sixteen years [raised in SST to eighteen years which has been the age of majority for the USA since 1994], is to be punished with just penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants”) and the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, c. 1453 §1 (“A cleric who lives in concubinage or gives permanent scandal by publicly sinning against chastity is to be punished with a suspension, to which, other penalties can be gradually added up to deposition, if he persists in the offense”).

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical*

Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State, 1995, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site compliance audits were in compliance with Article 1.

Article 1 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* requires dioceses/eparchies to reach out to victims/survivors and their families in an effort to offer healing and reconciliation. This expectation applies to recent as well as past cases. In addition to the offer of outreach, the bishop/eparch or his representative is directed to offer to meet with victims and their families.

All dioceses/eparchies that were audited advised that they provide outreach to victims/survivors and their families. Pope Benedict XVI provided an exemplary model of outreach comprising compassion and understanding during his visit to the United States in 2008.

The process and range of outreach provided by the dioceses/eparchies is as varied as the locations themselves and includes psychological, emotional, spiritual, and practical help of many kinds. Those initiatives include psychological, spiritual, and financial assistance and are meant to help further the healing of the victim/survivor and his/her reconciliation with the Church.

The wording of the *Charter* itself is very clear about the importance the bishops place on their responsibility to help victims/survivors finding healing and reconciliation: “The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victims is for healing and reconciliation.” Many victims/survivors report the outreach is automatic, sincere, and comprehensive; but there are still a few complaints that staffs within the dioceses are not as responsive or kind as the victim would have hoped. Also, even though the *Charter* states that an

offer to meet with the victims and their families is to be made by the diocesan/eparchial bishop or his representative, the victims really want to meet with the bishop himself and not his representative. Victims are disappointed when the bishop delegates the meeting to someone else.

Psychological assistance is usually provided in the form of therapeutic sessions for the individual and family members in need. Spiritual assistance is provided in many forms such as healing masses, retreats, prayer gardens, and ongoing support groups for both victims and affected family members. Financial assistance ranges from paying past medical bills to helping the victim overcome current financial difficulties. Again, the outreach is as varied as the locations, which shows the wide range of pathways to healing for people.

Sexual abuse remains a pervasive problem in society. Sexual abusers of children are found in every profession. Because numerous sexual abuse victims are members of the faithful and are in need of healing and compassion, many dioceses/eparchies have included all victims of sexual abuse or childhood trauma in their outreach and healing programs.

Dioceses/eparchies continue to cooperate with each other in providing assistance and outreach to victims/survivors. Because victims and abusers may have moved since the abuse occurred, it is not always clear which diocese is responsible for outreach. Diocesan boundaries have also changed in the last 50-60 years. These and a number of other factors make it necessary for the dioceses/eparchies and their respective victim assistance coordinators (VAC) to work together for the best interests of the healing and reconciliation for the victim/survivor. Numerous examples in which a diocese provided assistance to victims of other dioceses are noted, though there have been a few reported instances wherein the responsiveness of one diocese to another is limited, causing frustration. Assistance that one diocese provides to another takes the form of handling complaints, providing services, and checking in on the victim periodically, as well as arranging local therapeutic counseling.

The scope and duration of the assistance/outreach provided to the victim/survivor remains an issue,

especially once a financial settlement has been reached. This is an area where expertise is frequently sought often from the members of the diocesan review board.

While most survivors who were interviewed reported prompt attention, other survivors reported having to make several phone calls before being heard by the appropriate person. When a victim finally finds the courage to reach out to the diocese/eparchy, it is vital that the opportunity for healing begin positively. Dioceses/eparchies should continue to improve the response to victims of clergy sexual abuse. It should not be difficult or challenging for any victim to connect with the diocesan/eparchial VAC. This will be addressed further in Article 2 in this chapter.

ARTICLE 2. Dioceses/eparchies are to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. Dioceses/eparchies are to have a competent person or persons to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint are to be readily available in printed form in the principal languages in which the liturgy is celebrated in the diocese/eparchy and be the subject of public announcements at least annually.

Dioceses/eparchies are also to have a review board that functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop/eparch. The majority of its members are to be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese/eparchy (see Norm 5 in *Essential Norms for Diocesan/eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, 2002). This board is to advise the diocesan/eparchial bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. It is regularly to review diocesan/eparchial policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. Also, the board can review these matters both retrospectively and prospectively and give advice on all aspects of responses in connection with these cases.

The Diocese of Las Cruces was found to be non-compliant with this Article because the diocesan review board had not been functional for some time.

This was immediately corrected when brought to the attention of the bishop. In December 2008, The Gavin Group, Inc., recognized the diocese for the outstanding job that it had done since its September 2008 audit. The Diocese of Las Cruces had reconstituted the diocesan review board and thus become compliant.

Article 2 requires dioceses/eparchies to have a mechanism in place to promptly respond to allegations of clergy sexual abuse. This includes having a qualified victim assistance coordinator (VAC) in the diocese/eparchy to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of those persons who have reported being sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for making a complaint are to be readily available to the public. This is to ensure that complaints brought to the attention of the diocese/eparchy are handled appropriately. A quick, heartfelt response on behalf of the dioceses/eparchies is critical to the healing process. Article 2 also requires a diocesan review board be established. Its existence, composition, and role are reviewed during the audit process.

In all dioceses/eparchies receiving an on-site audit, the procedures for making a complaint of sexual abuse against a cleric are being made available to the public. Procedures and policies are posted online in addition to being placed in telephone books and printed on posters, cards, and a variety of other published diocesan materials in an effort to ensure that all in the diocese/eparchy are aware of the diocesan/eparchial procedures and policies. Posted information was verified by auditors.

All dioceses/eparchies having on-site audits have a VAC in place. The audit process included a review of the qualifications of those in such positions. The qualifications and experience of the VACs include psychologists, therapists and other mental health professionals, social workers, teachers, nurses, and child welfare workers.

The *Charter* calls for the contact information for the VAC to be made readily available to the public. This is a crucial step in reaching victims and restoring trust in the Church. Auditors were asked to independently

find the number for the respective diocesan/eparchial VAC and to call the VAC, in order to ascertain how easy it was for the auditor to locate the phone number, as well as how promptly the call was returned.

Overall the return calls to the auditor were very prompt: many within 10-20 minutes. In some cases when problems with the contact information were discovered, changes were made and the problem was resolved by the time the audit process was over.

However, there were cases in which the auditors could not find the number for the diocesan VAC; and/or when they did and called the VAC, the call was not returned promptly. Confusion, too, existed in some dioceses when the auditor, not finding a specific number for the VAC, called the main diocesan number only to be greeted by a confused staff member who did not know what or who the VAC was for the diocese. These issues were all brought to the attention of the specific dioceses and were corrected. Problems such as these will be reviewed again in future years.

When individuals make an allegation of sexual abuse, it is critical that the person to whom they need to speak can be reached quickly. It can take many years for a victim/survivor to get the courage to make the allegation. That courage needs to be acknowledged and honored. Also, while the victim/survivor may be aware that diocesan phone lines cannot be monitored 24 hours a day, a prompt response to a message left by a victim/survivor is essential. Additionally, victims/survivors may be hesitant to leave a name and number; but if they are assured that someone will be available during specific hours, they may feel comfortable calling at a later time.

Abuse victims/survivors need to be reassured that their discussion will be kept in the strictest of confidence, and that the diocese does care about their healing. Thus, for those victims/survivors who call when the VAC is not available, it would be most helpful if the message on the diocesan phone line could clearly identify the office/person as the location where assistance is available, indicate the name of the VAC, and make a short statement advising the victim/survivor that the diocese cares about their healing.

In an effort to help victims/survivors locate a diocesan/eparchial VAC, the USCCB Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection lists on its Web site the names and contact information for each diocesan/eparchial VAC. This information can be found at www.usccb.org/ocyp/helpandhealing.shtml. **The current VAC information from the SCYP site is also provided in Appendix D of this Report.** Those dioceses/eparchies without information listed did not furnish the information to the Secretariat when asked or did not wish it posted.

Diocesan review boards have been established in all dioceses/eparchies that received on-site audits. Their role and the membership are reviewed during the audit process. Diocesan review boards serve as a confidential, consultative body to the bishop, offering their advice on matters of clergy sexual abuse. Diocesan review boards include members from varied backgrounds: mental health and law enforcement professionals, clergy, canon lawyers, social workers, judges, and attorneys. The majority of lay members are not to be, nor were found to be, in the employ of the diocese/eparchy. The review boards of dioceses/eparchies where there are few allegations of abuse meet less frequently than those of dioceses/eparchies that have a greater number of allegations. Boards also frequently review diocesan policies and procedures in both a prospective and retrospective manner.

ARTICLE 3. Dioceses/eparchies are not to enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality unless the victim/survivor requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site audit were in compliance with Article 3.

Article 3 prohibits dioceses/eparchies from entering into confidential agreements with a victim/survivor *unless* the victim/survivor requests confidentiality and this request is *noted* in the text of the agreement. In short, the dioceses/eparchies may enter a confidential agreement *only* if the victim requests it, and a note to that effect must be placed in the agreement. This is to demonstrate the willingness to be open and transparent in matters of clergy sexual abuse.

This is a short but critical Article that speaks to the core of trust that the Church is working hard to restore.

A small number of dioceses/eparchies have entered into such agreements that contain confidentiality clauses at the request of the victim. In a few of those, the diocese has not noted that confidentiality was requested by the victim/survivor; when reminded by the auditor that such a note is required, the respective agreements were corrected. It is usually the amount of the settlement that the victim wishes to remain confidential, not the nature of the abuse.

TO GUARANTEE AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

ARTICLE 4. Dioceses/eparchies are to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to the public authorities. Dioceses/eparchies are to comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the jurisdiction in question.

Dioceses/eparchies are to cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases even when the person is no longer a minor.

In every instance, dioceses/eparchies are to advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and support this right.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 compliance audits were in compliance with Article 4.

Article 4 requires that each diocese/eparchy report any allegation of clergy sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to the public authorities, comply with all applicable civil laws, and cooperate with the investigation conducted by civil authorities. It also requires that dioceses/eparchies cooperate with civil authorities even when the person reporting abuse is no longer a minor.

During the 2008 audit period, dioceses/eparchies reported 31 allegations of abuse of minors who were minors at the time of the report.

Below is a reflection of how each respective diocese categorized the status of the allegation involving the sexual abuse of a minor at the time of the audit:

Being prosecuted at time of audit	4
Accused plea pending	1
Credible civil and Church	1
Guilty plea	1
Under investigation	1
Investigation pending	1
Unfounded	16
Not provable civil and Church	1
Civil declined/Church pending	3
Civil unproved/Church pending	1
Civil not proven/Church to Rome	1

The initial investigation of allegations involving the sexual abuse of a minor requires great skill and objectivity. The *Charter* is very clear in stating that *any* allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor *must* be reported to public authorities, with no exceptions.

Due to safe environment training that is increasing people's awareness of grooming behaviors, as well as stricter codes of conduct, people are more cognizant of improper behavior and thus are bringing suspicious behavior to the attention of church personnel. That is good news. But what is difficult now for many dioceses is determining exactly what happened, as well as who should determine the facts of the allegations. Unfortunately, many dioceses are conducting the investigations themselves without also making a report to civil authorities.

Allegations of sexual abuse involving a current minor are the most serious allegations that can exist. Dioceses conducting their own investigation to determine what exactly happened without first contacting law enforcement run the risk of being severely criticized and also of conducting an improper and inadequate investigation: one in which all the facts may not be determined. Diocesan personnel do not have the law enforcement investigative expertise to properly investigate allegations involving the sexual abuse of a minor. These are specialized investigations for two key reasons: (1) it is an investigation involving a juvenile, for which there are separate sets of applicable laws, and (2) investigations of sexual

abuse are specialized investigations requiring a specialized skillset and training. Neither of these is possessed by diocesan personnel. Also, for the sake of objectivity, these investigations need to be forwarded to law enforcement for a proper investigation so that the diocese/eparchy is not perceived as perpetrating some sort of cover-up if there is an "unfounded" finding.

Parishioners are trained to communicate their concerns about inappropriate behavior or activities, and they seem to be doing just that. Not all behavior reported meets the standard of sexual abuse, however. As the 2008 audit information reflects, often the reports pertained to inappropriate activities or boundary violations. Rather than being thought of as nuisances, these reports actually let dioceses/eparchies know that trained adults are more aware of inappropriate behavior and are more willing to report concerns they have. A key element in the scandal was the reluctance of people to come forward with concerns, and their unwillingness to believe that a trusted member of the clergy could be capable of such horrific behavior.

A quick preliminary investigation conducted by diocesan personnel may not be troublesome. But again, technically Article 4 does not mention the diocese's conducting any investigation unless requested to do so by civil authorities. The *Charter* states emphatically that the dioceses/eparchies "are to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to public authorities." It does not say "after a preliminary investigation." Anything beyond that requires notification to civil authorities to ascertain how to proceed next: whether law enforcement will handle the investigation from that point on, or if diocesan personnel should handle the necessary follow-up. That is the decision of the civil authorities, not the dioceses' decision.

In several areas civil authorities do not want to be notified of all cases of sexual abuse that happened in the past—especially those that occurred years ago, beyond the statutes of limitations. In those situations, dioceses/eparchies have agreed to report cases that fall within the local statute of limitations.

It is recommended that the decision about whether to notify civil authorities in these instances be worked out between the dioceses/eparchies and the civil

authorities beforehand—not when an allegation comes to the attention of the diocese/eparchy. Also, the openness and working relationship between the diocese/eparchy and civil authorities must be such as to afford the diocese/eparchy the ability to contact civil authorities at any time if an allegation were to arise: not just Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Several dioceses/eparchies also have Memorandums of Understanding with local jurisdictions about when to report cases of sexual abuse to them for both historical cases and those involving individuals who are currently minors.

Lastly, it is not uncommon for victims/survivors not to want to report their allegation to civil authorities; they just want the dioceses/eparchies to be aware of the sexual abuse. All dioceses/eparchies that were audited on-site encourage victims/survivors to report the abuse to the local civil authorities regardless of time limits.

ARTICLE 5. We affirm the words of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers: “There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young.”

Sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1). Because of the seriousness of this matter, jurisdiction has been reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, AAS 93, 2001). Sexual abuse of a minor is also a crime in all civil jurisdictions in the United States.

Diocesan/eparchial policy is to provide that for even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor*—whenever it occurred—which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. In keeping with the stated purpose of this *Charter*, an offending priest or deacon is to be offered therapeutic professional assistance both for the purpose of prevention and also for his own healing and well-being. The diocesan/eparchial bishop is to exercise his power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, to ensure that any priest or deacon subject to his governance who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described below (see note) shall not continue in ministry.

A priest or deacon who is accused of sexual abuse of a minor is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect his reputation. He is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. If the allegation is not proven, every step possible is to be taken to restore his good name, should it have been harmed.

In fulfilling this article, dioceses/eparchies are to follow the requirements of the universal law of the Church and of the *Essential Norms* approved for the United States.

* In accord with *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 4 §1, sexual abuse, for purposes of this *Charter*, shall include any offense by a cleric against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with a minor as understood in the *Code of Canon Law*, c. 1395 §2 (“A cleric who in another way has committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, if the delict was committed by force or threats or publicly or with a minor below the age of sixteen years [raised in SST to eighteen years which has been the age of majority for the USA since 1994], is to be punished with just penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants”) and the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, c. 1453 §1 (“A cleric who lives in concubinage or gives permanent scandal by publicly sinning against chastity is to be punished with a suspension, to which, other penalties can be gradually added up to deposition, if he persists in the offense”).

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site compliance audits were in compliance with Article 5.

Article 5 affirms the words of Pope John Paul II, who stated, “There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young.” It requires all dioceses/eparchies to follow the *Essential Norms* when dealing with the delict of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric. The *Norms* state that when an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively.

The audit process focuses on whether the diocese/eparchy has a policy for dealing with accused clergy [priests and deacons] that includes the following:

- Removal from ministry
- Offers of therapeutic assistance
- Encouragement to retain civil and canonical counsel
- Restoration of the good name of the accused if the allegation is not proven

In all dioceses/eparchies receiving on-site audits, the auditors verified that the above tenets are included in a written diocesan/eparchial policy or that, based upon the past actions by diocesan/eparchial personnel, the respective tenets have been the policy of the diocese/eparchy.

As a rule, clergy are often removed from ministry while the preliminary investigation takes place. Some dioceses/eparchies place accused clergy on administrative leave or restricted ministry until the investigation is complete. Others permit the clergy to remain in active ministry while the investigation is underway. Many dioceses/eparchies have outside personnel conducting the preliminary investigation; most are current or former law enforcement professionals.

On-site auditors examine the allegations, keeping in mind the need for confidentiality and privacy as well as civil and canon law requirements. During the 2008 audit period, 971 victims made allegations of clergy abuse: 940 adults reported past abuse, and 31 minors reported recent abuse. Those allegations identified 718 clerics: 702 priests and 16 deacons.

The full breakdown is as follows:

Total Number of Accused Priests	702
Total Number of Accused Deacons	16
Number of Diocesan Priests	510
Number of Diocesan Deacons	16
Number of Religious Order Priests	110
Number of Religious Order Deacons	0
Number of Extern Priests	22
Number of “Unknown” Clerics	60
Number of Deceased Clerics	293

Number of Laicized Clerics	64
Number of Clerics Who Had Been Removed or Placed on Restricted Ministry	246
Number of Clerics with Prior Allegations	339
Number of Allegations That Were Unfounded and/or Unable to Be Proven	79

A major challenge that remains is determining the exact nature of what is being reported: is it an allegation of sexual abuse or a report of inappropriate behavior (boundary violations) that does not reach the level of abuse in civil law? For the overall safety of children, it is imperative that all suspicious behaviors be reported to the diocese/eparchy for proper vetting. Dioceses/eparchies continually work to protect the reputation of those involved in false accusations, keeping in mind that the need to protect children must always be the highest priority.

An additional challenge is for the diocese/eparchy to decide whether a report should be made to local civil authorities. It is always better to report the incident and have the civil authorities decide whether a crime has taken place, rather than not report the suspicious behavior and have an innocent child harmed. Again, this is why the relationship between the diocese/eparchy and civil authorities needs to be one of cooperation, so that when questions do arise about whether something should be reported to civil authorities, the diocese/eparchy will be comfortable in reaching out to civil authorities for an opinion.

ARTICLE 6. There are to be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site compliance audits were in compliance with Article 6.

Article 6 requires all dioceses/eparchies to have clear and well-publicized standards for behavior of clergy, church workers, and volunteers who have regular contact with children and young people.

All dioceses/eparchies that were audited on-site have standards of behavior for clergy, church workers, and volunteers who work with children. These standards are distributed throughout the dioceses/eparchies in a variety of ways. They are posted on the diocesan/eparchial Web site, provided in employee manuals, distributed during employee orientations, or disseminated during the diocesan/eparchial safe environment training. Many dioceses/eparchies require clergy, employees, and volunteers to sign a statement saying they have read the standards and agree to abide by them. The standards of ministerial behavior along with the safe environment training and the background evaluations form the cornerstones of a safety hedge of protection around children and young people—critical barriers between the children and those who wish to cause them harm.

The definition of what constitutes “regular contact” remains challenging for dioceses/eparchies to determine. More and more dioceses/eparchies are requiring all clergy, church workers, and volunteers to receive a copy of the standards of ministerial behavior. Doing so alleviates the challenge and possible confusion of determining the meaning and application of “regular contact” and enhances the safe environment of the parish and school.

The more that adults are aware of what is considered appropriate behavior, the more they can act to report “grooming” or other inappropriate behavior to the proper authorities. This increases the chances that offenders will be caught during the grooming process and before a child is harmed.

ARTICLE 7. Dioceses/eparchies are to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors by clergy within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. This is especially so with regard to informing parish and other church communities directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site compliance audits were in compliance with Article 7.

Article 7 requires dioceses/eparchies to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors by clergy, within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. This especially applies to informing those parishes and other church communities that are directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors.

All dioceses/eparchies that were audited on-site have policies that pledge open and transparent communication. Many of these policies are written and can be found on the diocesan Web site. Several dioceses have taken a proactive approach to this issue and have actively cultivated relationships with the local press and broadcast media. Many dioceses also routinely update parishes on the status of clergy misconduct. Some dioceses even post on their Web site the list of clergy who have been removed from ministry. Open communication is important to providing safe environments for the children and young people of the parish as well as restoring trust in the Church.

Protecting the reputation of the accused during the preliminary investigation remains a challenge. During the investigation, the accused is to enjoy the presumption of innocence; according to the *Essential Norms*, all steps shall be taken to protect his reputation. Balancing the need to protect the accused’s reputation during the investigation and the need to protect children will always be a delicate but critical task.

TO ENSURE THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF OUR PROCEDURES

(Articles 8-11 are not included in the audit process.)

ARTICLE 8. By the authority of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse is renewed, and it is now constituted the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. It becomes a standing committee of the Conference. Its membership is to include representation from all the episcopal regions of the country, with new appointments staggered to maintain continuity in the effort to protect children and youth.

The Committee is to advise the USCCB on all matters related to child and youth protection and is to oversee the development of the plans, programs, and budget of the Office of Child and Youth Protection. It is to provide the USCCB with comprehensive planning and recommendations concerning child and youth protection by coordinating the efforts of the Office and the National Review Board.

Membership of the USCCB Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People (CPCYP) between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008, included the following bishops, shown with the Region they represented:

Bishop Gregory M. Aymond, Chair
Term expired November 2008

Bishop Blase J. Cupich, Chair-Elect
Term began in November 2008/expires November 2011

Bishop Richard J. Malone (I)
Term expired November 2008

Bishop Robert J. Cunningham (II)
Term expires November 2010

Bishop Joseph R. Cistone (III)
Term expires November 2009

Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski (IV)
Term expires November 2010

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer (V)
Term expires November 2010

Bishop R. Daniel Conlon (VI)
Term expires November 2009

Bishop George J. Lucas (VII)
Term expires November 2010

Bishop Paul J. Swain (VIII)
Term expires November 2009

Bishop William J. Dendinger (IX)
Term expired November 2008

Bishop Edward J. Slattery (X)
Term expired November 2008

Bishop Gerald E. Wilkerson (XI)
Term expires November 2010

Bishop George L. Thomas (XII)
Term expired November 2008

Bishop David L. Ricken (XIII)
Term expired November 2008

Bishop J. Kevin Boland (XIV)
Term expired November 2008

Bishop William C. Skurla (XV)
Term expires November 2009

In November 2007, the terms of four members expired:

Bishop Howard J. Hubbard (Region II)
Bishop (now Archbishop) Thomas J. Rodi (Region V)
Bishop Thomas G. Doran (Region VII)
Bishop Stephen E. Blaire (Region XI)

Upon the recommendations of their metropolitan archbishops, the following bishops accepted the invitation by Bishop Aymond to participate in the CPCYP:

Bishop Richard J. Malone (I)—accepted a renewal of his term appointment
Term expires November 2011

Bishop Patrick J. Zurek (X)
Term expires November 2011

Bishop Michael O. Jackels (IX)
Term expires November 2011

Bishop Michael W. Warfel (XII)
Term expires November 2011

Bishop Michael J. Sheridan (XIII)
Term expires November 2011

Bishop John G. Noonan (XIV)
Term expires November 2011

The CPCYP was also assisted by the following consultants:

Rev. Msgr. Edward Burns, then-Executive Director, USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations

Rev. Msgr. Ronny Jenkins, Associate General Secretary, USCCB

Rev. Paul Lininger, OFM Conv, Executive Director, Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Mrs. Helen Osman, Secretary of Communications, USCCB

Mr. Anthony Picarello, General Counsel, USCCB

Very Rev. Thomas Picton, CSsR, President, Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Sr. Mary Ann Walsh, RSM, Director, USCCB Office of Media Relations

The CPCYP meets during the months of March, June, September, and November. At two of those meetings, June and November, the CPCYP also meets jointly with the National Review Board.

In May 2008, the CPCYP organized the 2008 international Anglophone Conference comprising the personnel of the English-speaking Catholic bishops' conferences who deal with the issues of child and youth protection. This year's Conference was held at the USCCB headquarters in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the Anglophone Conference, which is in its tenth year, is to discuss those issues related to clergy sexual abuse within each country's respective bishops' conference. Individuals from eleven countries participated.

ARTICLE 9. The Office for Child and Youth Protection, established by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, is to staff the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People and be a resource for dioceses/eparchies for the implementation of "safe environment" programs and for suggested training and development of diocesan personnel responsible for child and youth protection programs, taking into account the financial and other resources, as well as the population, area, and demographics of the diocese/eparchy.

The Office is to produce an annual public report on the progress made in implementing and maintaining the standards in this *Charter*. The report is to be based on an annual audit process whose method, scope, and cost are to be approved by the Administrative Committee on the recommendation of the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. This public report is to include the names of those dioceses/eparchies which the audit shows are not in compliance with the provisions and expectations of the *Charter*.

As a member of the Conference staff, the Executive Director of the Office is appointed by and reports to the General Secretary. The Executive Director is to provide the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People and the National Review Board with regular reports of the Office's activities.

Due to a restructuring at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Office of Child and Youth Protection is now called the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection (SCYP). At the beginning of the audit period, July 1, 2007, the now-SCYP consisted of the following four staff members: Executive Director Teresa Kettelkamp, Associate Director Sheila Kelly, Executive Assistant Margaret Sienko, and Staff Assistant Nija Hepburn.

Ms. Hepburn was replaced by Ms. Courtney Kerns, who joined the SCYP in mid-July 2008. Ms. Kelly retired at the beginning of July 2008, with Ms. Mary Jane Doerr joining the Secretariat at the end of June 2008.

The Secretariat provides monthly reports to the members of the CPCYP and the National Review Board (NRB). These reports reflect the administrative efforts of the SCYP within the USCCB, the external support provided by the SCYP to the (arch)dioceses/eparchies on *Charter*-related matters, and the work of the CPCYP and NRB as supported and facilitated by the Secretariat.

Additional information on the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection can be found online at www.usccb.org/ocyp/whoweare.shtml.

ARTICLE 10. The whole Church, especially the laity, at both the diocesan and national levels, needs to be engaged in maintaining safe environments in the Church for children and young people.

The Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People is to be assisted by the National Review Board, a consultative body established in 2002 by the USCCB. The Board will review the annual report of the Office of Child and Youth Protection on the implementation of this *Charter* in each diocese/eparchy and any recommendations that emerge from it, and offer its own assessment regarding its approval and publication to the Conference President.

The Board will also advise the Conference President on future members. The Board members are appointed by the Conference President in consultation with the Administrative Committee and are accountable to him and to the USCCB Executive Committee. Before a candidate is contacted, the Conference President is to seek and obtain, in writing, the endorsement of the candidate's diocesan bishop. The Board is to operate in accord with the statutes and bylaws of the USCCB and within procedural guidelines to be developed by the Board in consultation with the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People and approved by the USCCB Administrative Committee. These guidelines are to set forth such matters as the Board's purpose and responsibility, officers, terms of office, and frequency of reports to the Conference President on its activities.

The Board will offer its advice as it collaborates with the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People on matters of child and youth protection, specifically on policies and best practices. The Board and Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People will meet jointly several times a year.

The Board will review the work of the Office of Child and Youth Protection and make recommendations to the Director. It will assist the Director in the development of resources for dioceses.

The Board is to oversee the completion of the study of the causes and context of the recent crisis. The Board will offer its assessment of the data gathered and preliminary results to the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People as the study moves forward.

The current membership of the National Review Board comprises the following individuals:

Judge Michael R. Merz, Chair

Term expires June 2009

Dr. Ana Maria Catanzaro

Term expires June 2011

Mr. Thomas DeStefano

Term expires June 2009

Dr. Ruben Gallegos

Term expires June 2011

Dr. Emmet M. Kenney Jr.

Term expires June 2010

Ms. Diane M. Knight

Term expires June 2011

Justice Robert Charles Kohm

Term expires June 2010

Mr. William McGarry

Term expires June 2009

Mr. Al J. Notzon III

Term expires June 2011

Dr. Thomas G. Plante

Term expires June 2011

Dr. Joseph G. Rhode

Term expires June 2009

Judge Geraldine Rivera

Term expires June 2011

Dr. Susan Steibe-Pasalich

Term expires June 2010

In June 2008, the terms of the following members of the National Review Board expired:

Dr. Patricia O'Donnell Ewers (chair)

Dr. Angelo P. Giardino

Mr. Ralph I. Lancaster

Effective January 4, 2008, Mr. Joseph P. Russoniello, Esq., resigned as a member of the NRB to accept an appointment as U.S. Attorney for Northern California.

Cardinal Francis George, OMI, as President of the USCCB, appointed four persons to join the NRB for three-year terms commencing in June 2008:

Dr. Ana Maria Catanzaro

Dr. Ruben Gallegos

Mr. Al J. Notzon III

Dr. Thomas G. Plante

The National Review Board is structured with three officers and four committees as follows:

Chair—Judge Michael R. Merz

Vice Chair—Mr. Thomas DeStefano

Secretary—Ms. Diane M. Knight

Best Practices Committee—chaired by Mr. Thomas DeStefano and Ms. Diane Knight

Audit Committee—chaired by Mr. William McGarry

Research Committee—chaired by Dr. Susan Steibe-Pasalich

Nominating Committee—chaired by Mr. Thomas DeStefano

The NRB Chair is appointed by the USCCB President from persons nominated by the NRB. In January 2009, Cardinal George named Ms. Diane M. Knight to be Chair for a two-year term to commence in June 2009. The other officers are elected by the Board, and committee chairs are appointed by the Chair.

The Audit Committee continued its work on keeping the audit process updated and effective. The Best Practices Committee continued to offer suggestions to dioceses on how to implement safe environment training for children and also offered resources to Diocesan

Review Boards. The Research Committee maintained regular contact with the John Jay College of Criminal Justice as it studies the causes and context of the sexual abuse scandal. The Nominating Committee presented names for the open seats on the NRB for the 2009 year.

ARTICLE 11. The President of the Conference is to inform the Holy See of this revised *Charter* to indicate the manner in which we, the Catholic bishops, together with the entire Church in the United States, intend to continue our commitment to the protection of children and young people. The President is also to share with the Holy See the annual reports on the implementation of the *Charter*.

The President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Francis George, OMI, has shared a copy of this Annual Report with the Holy See.

TO PROTECT THE FAITHFUL IN THE FUTURE

ARTICLE 12. Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.

Of the dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site compliance audits, four were found to be non-compliant with the categories of Article 12 noted below at the time of their audit. However, most non-compliance has been remedied as of the end of 2008, as verified by a revisit to the diocese by an auditor.

Those four (arch)dioceses are as follows:

Diocese of Lansing	Article 12: volunteers	Remedied 12-1-08
Diocese of Las Cruces	Article 12: children, employees, volunteers	Remedied 12-3-08
Archdiocese of San Francisco	Article 12: children	Remedied 12-19-08
Diocese of Tulsa	Article 12: children	Not yet remedied

The Bishop of Baker in Oregon advised the auditors that he was refusing an audit because, as a matter of policy, no safe environment training for children was being conducted in that Diocese. Article 12 of the *Charter* mandates safe environment training. By refusing to be audited and refusing to conduct safe environment training for children, the Diocese of Baker is non-compliant with both Article 9 and Article 12.

Article 12 requires dioceses/eparchies to provide training to clergy, employees, and volunteers who work with children about how to create a safe environment. This Article also requires dioceses/eparchies to provide personal safety training for children and young people.

Dioceses/eparchies have come up with a variety of ways to deliver the required training. The majority of dioceses/eparchies have purchased programs from a commercial company. Some have developed their own courses. Some programs have an online component; others rely on live training. Training programs are held throughout the dioceses/eparchies on a regular basis. Children’s training programs may be included in health education classes or religion classes, depending on the curriculum. Bishops do review the programs for the necessary alignment with Catholic doctrine.

Article 12 remains one of the most difficult Articles for which to receive a compliance rating. The challenges are many, ranging from data management to training the trainers.

Article 12 requires dioceses/eparchies to list the number of children/youth, priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, educators, employees, and volunteers in the diocese/eparchy, along with statistics on how many have been trained and how many need training. Auditors want to see evidence of the process used to determine those numbers. Typically, dioceses/eparchies have appointed safe environment program coordinators not only to guide these diocesan/eparchial efforts but also to keep the records about the safe environment training conducted and background evaluations processed as well as to keep, or in some cases develop, the databases necessary to meet the audit standards. Dioceses/eparchies that have qualified people to perform these functions have an easier time showing compliance with this Article. If there are no personnel, or if there are limited personnel within the diocese/eparchy to fulfill these tasks, then the diocese/eparchy faces a greater challenge to satisfy *Charter* compliance.

Appendix E of this report provides a directory of the diocesan/eparchial safe environment program coordinators, along with their contact information. This list can also be found on the USCCB/SCYP Web site: www.usccb.org/ocyp/sepcoord.shtml.

All dioceses/eparchies have training programs in place for clergy, employees, and volunteers who work with children and for children themselves. The challenge is maintaining the necessary records as evidence to prove that the people are trained as well as knowing what people need to receive the training. The sheer number of people needing to be trained and the fluctuation of that group can strain the capabilities of many smaller dioceses as well as the larger archdioceses. Eparchies with a small or large number of parishes spread out over several states have their own set of challenges in conducting training and keeping the necessary records.

One issue that auditors monitor closely is the number of children within the diocese/eparchy who have not received safe environment training either because they have been opted out of the training by their parents or because they were absent when the training was provided. In one diocese the actual number of opt-outs was almost 23,000 children. Absentee rates in religious education programs can be as high as 25% in some dioceses/eparchies.

Though the dioceses/eparchies are not found to be non-compliant when children have not received safe environment training due to opt-outs or absence, the bottom line is that these children have not received safe environment training: the intent of which is to give them the knowledge and skill to help keep them from harm.

These numbers should be carefully watched by the dioceses/eparchies. And if the diocese/eparchy can do anything more to increase the number of children trained—for the children’s sake, not for the sake of the audit—then it should be done. This could include changing the training dates to a more convenient date for the children and parents or explaining in greater detail the purpose of the training and what composes the curriculum, in order to alleviate concerns a parent may have about the training.

Another issue is that while many states mandate this training, not all states fund it. Dioceses/eparchies are then charged with the task of determining whether the local school districts actually do provide the necessary safe environment training for children who do not attend Catholic schools. Dioceses/eparchies that cover large geographic regions can easily have 100 different school districts within their boundaries, making this task challenging. Large archdioceses may cover small geographic areas with large population centers, making verifying the training equally challenging.

The audit instruments ask for the number of people in each category as of June 30 of the audit year. Because most school and religious education programs have typically concluded by that time of the year, there was some confusion as to the number to be used for the audit. Individuals who left employment or their volunteer positions prior to June 30 added more confusion to the issue of who should be counted. These situations highlight the need for a thorough understanding of the audit requirements and of having a qualified personnel in the safe environment program coordinator position.

Auditors require the dioceses/eparchies provide evidence that such training is taking place in the dioceses/eparchies on a regular basis.

The numbers reported nationwide are as follows:

CATEGORY	NUMBER TO BE TRAINED	NUMBER TRAINED	PERCENTAGE TRAINED
Priests	37,709	37,470	99.4
Deacons	14,463	14,411	99.6
Candidates for Ordination	5,632	5,516	97.9
Educators	166,127	165,154	99.4
Employees	243,065	238,734	98.2
Volunteers	1,463,100	1,463,946	98.2
Children	5,705,735	5,513,259	96.6

ARTICLE 13. Dioceses/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all incardinated and non-incardinated priests and deacons who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese/eparchy and of all diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. In addition, they are to employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation* [Fifth Edition], 2006, no. 39).

Of the dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site compliance audits, only one diocese was found to be non-compliant with Article 13 at the time of its audit. However, this non-compliance was remediated as of the end of 2008, as verified by a revisit to the diocese by an auditor.

Diocese of Las Cruces	Article 13: volunteers and employees	Remedied 12-3-08
--------------------------	--	---------------------

Article 13 requires a background evaluation be conducted on all clergy who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese/eparchy. Additionally, the Article requires background evaluations for all

employees and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors.

Dioceses/eparchies have made tremendous progress in meeting the requirements of this Article. The tasks of arranging for background evaluations and tracking those evaluations have been enormous challenges for the dioceses/eparchies. Other challenges include the numbers of volunteers, the state laws that dictate how a background check may be accomplished, and the cost to run a background evaluation. The necessary paperwork involved in this Article can strain the diocesan/eparchial offices called upon to carry out the work, but most dioceses/eparchies seem to have worked out viable solutions.

An ancillary issue within a number of dioceses/eparchies is who specifically in that diocese/eparchy should make the decision on whether a particular person is suitable to volunteer or work in the church environment based on the information received from a background evaluation. That specific decision maker varies from place to place, and there does not seem to be consistency in that area. The key is not who makes the decision, but that the process be thorough and complete, so that if anything indicates that an individual would not be suitable to have access to a child in the care of the Church, that person will be precluded from having such access.

In the table below are statistics from the 2008 audit reflecting the various populations in each category for whom background evaluations are to be conducted, the actual number checked, and then the percentage of that number to the total.

The results of the audit show near complete compliance. However, the Church can never become lax in this area. Routine screening of people to help assess if they should have access to children who are in the care of the Church is a key cornerstone in creating and maintaining a safe environment for children.

ARTICLE 14. Transfers of clergy who have committed an act of sexual abuse against a minor for residence, including retirement, shall be as in accord with Norm 12 of the *Essential Norms*. (Cf. *Proposed Guidelines on the Transfer or Assignment of Clergy and Religious*, adopted by the USCCB, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious in 1993.)

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site audits were found to be compliant with Article 14.

Transfers of clergy who have committed sexual abuse of a minor are governed by Essential Norm 12, which states they may not be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese. Also, just as critical to the goal of openness and transparency as well as to the safety of children is the requirement that every bishop/eparch who receives a priest or deacon from outside his jurisdiction will obtain the necessary information regarding any past act of sexual abuse of a minor by the priest or deacon in question. This information is normally referred to a “Letter of Suitability.”

Each diocese/eparchy that was audited on-site has clear policies governing this situation. This includes clergy being incardinated as well as those visiting or performing ministry on a temporary or short-term basis.

It remains a challenge for a number of dioceses/eparchies located in favorite retirement or vacation spots to keep track of retired and vacationing priests who may be away from their own diocese/eparchy for extended periods of time and reside in another diocese/eparchy. In those cases, the dioceses/eparchies have established policies requiring visiting priests to present Letters of Suitability prior to their ministering in the diocese/eparchy.

CATEGORY	NUMBER TO BE CHECKED	NUMBER CHECKED	PERCENTAGE CHECKED
Priests	37,709	37,643	99.8
Deacons	14,463	14,447	99.9
Candidates for Ordination	5,632	5,580	99.1
Educators	166,127	165,763	99.8
Employees	243,065	241,468	99.3
Volunteers	1,463,100	1,446,156	98.8

ARTICLE 15. To ensure continuing collaboration and mutuality of effort in the protection of children and young people on the part of the bishops and religious ordinaries, two representatives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men are to serve as consultants to the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. At the invitation of the Major Superiors, the Committee will designate two of its members to consult with its counterpart at CMSM. Diocesan/eparchial bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates are to meet periodically to coordinate their roles concerning the issue of allegations made against a cleric member of a religious institute ministering in a diocese/eparchy.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site audits were found to be compliant with Article 15.

The entire focus of this Article is to ensure that there is openness and collaboration between the bishops and religious ordinaries in addressing the issue of clergy sexual abuse uniformly, as well as ensuring that if an allegation were to arise within a diocese involving a member of a religious order, the respective roles concerning this issue will have previously been agreed upon.

This Article states three distinct mandates to ensure continued collaboration and mutuality of effort in the protection of children and young people on the part of the bishops and religious ordinaries:

- *Two representatives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) are to serve as consultants to the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People (CPCYP).* This has been satisfied by the appointment of the CMSM President and Executive Director as consultants to the CPCYP.
- *At the invitation of the Major Superiors, the Committee will designate two of its members to consult with its counterpart at CMSM.* Three members of the CPCYP attended the CMSM Board Meeting in February 2008.
- *Diocesan/eparchial bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates are to meet periodically to coordinate their roles concerning the issue of allegations made against a*

cleric member of a religious institute ministering in a diocese/eparchy. This is the primary focus of the auditors during the on-site audits.

The auditors ask whether the diocese/eparchy has policies and/or procedures for meeting (or otherwise communicating) with the major superiors of clerical institutes with regard to allegations against members of those institutes. Audit verification includes identities of persons interviewed, description of documents reviewed, and a general description of those communications that occurred during the audit period.

The audits reveal good communication between bishops, eparchs, and major superiors of religious orders. Many have yearly meetings; others host regular meetings throughout the year.

ARTICLE 16. Given the extent of the problem of the sexual abuse of minors in our society, we are willing to cooperate with other churches and ecclesial communities, other religious bodies, institutions of learning, and other interested organizations in conducting research in this area.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site audit were found to be compliant with Article 16.

To evaluate compliance with this article, the auditors ask the dioceses/eparchies one question: Is the diocese/eparchy willing to cooperate with other churches and ecclesial communities, other religious bodies, institutions of learning, and other interested organizations in conducting research in this area (e.g., annual CARA survey)? Audit verification includes identities of persons interviewed, description of documents reviewed, and a general description of such cooperation that occurred during the audit period.

Of those dioceses/eparchies that were audited on-site, all had participated in the *CARA Survey of Allegations and Costs* (see Chapter 4 for CARA's report). Additionally, many dioceses/eparchies are participating in various data collection aspects of the *Causes and Context* study being undertaken by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York

City. Lastly, other faiths have asked members of the Catholic Church to speak to their own congregations about how the Catholic Church has addressed the problems of clergy sexual abuse, so that lessons learned by the Catholic Church can be shared with others.

Participation in these types of studies is very helpful for the Church as it tries to learn as much as possible about why clergy sexual abuse happened the way that it did, and what can be done to assure the faithful that it will never happen again.

ARTICLE 17. We pledge our complete cooperation with the Apostolic Visitation of our diocesan/eparchial seminaries and religious houses of formation recommended in the Interdicasterial Meeting with the Cardinals of the United States and the Conference Officers in April 2002.

We commit ourselves to work individually in our dioceses/eparchies and together as a Conference, through the appropriate committees, to strengthen our programs both for initial priestly formation and for the ongoing formation of priests. With new urgency, we will promote programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy for both seminarians and priests based upon the criteria found in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the *Program of Priestly Formation*, and the *Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*. We will continue to assist priests, deacons, and seminarians in living out their vocation in faithful and integral ways.

We bishops and eparchs commit ourselves to work as one with our brother priests and deacons to

foster reconciliation among all people in our dioceses/eparchies, especially with those individuals who were themselves abused and the communities that have suffered because of the sexual abuse of minors that occurred in their midst.

All dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2008 on-site audit were in compliance with Article 17.

Article 17 requires dioceses/eparchies to strengthen programs for priestly and diaconal formation—both initial and ongoing—and to continue to assist priests, deacons, and seminarians in living out their vocation in faithful and integral ways. In the Article, the bishops commit to fostering reconciliation among all people, especially those individuals personally abused and those communities that have suffered as a result of abuse.

Dioceses/eparchies conduct a variety of activities to fulfill this commitment. Annual clergy retreat days, weeklong convocations, informal meetings, religious pilgrimages, and social gatherings are held. Seminarians are given support and formation on all matters dealing with fully living their intended vocation with integrity. Also, numerous priests, deacons, and seminarians participate in mentoring programs.

Outreach to victims and parishes involves a range of activities that include healing services, retreats, days of prayer, and even a healing garden for victims of abuse.