



## **Backgrounder**

Papal Transition 2013

prepared by

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### ***Sexual Abuse***

*“It is your God-given responsibility as pastors to bind up the wounds caused by every breach of trust, to foster healing, to promote reconciliation and to reach out with loving concern to those so seriously wronged.” – Pope Benedict XVI to the U.S. bishops, April 16, 2008*

#### **How has the Catholic Church worked to combat sexual abuse of minors?**

- Pope Benedict XVI has met with victims in the United States, Ireland, Germany and elsewhere. He has addressed bishops both in the United States and in Ireland, as well as Catholics in general, on the issue.
- The Charter for Protection of Children and Young People was approved by the U.S. bishops in 2002 and revised in 2007 and 2011. It instituted a National Review Board and a USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection.
- There has been a Zero Tolerance policy on abusers since 2002. When even a single act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry.
- Dioceses/eparchies require intensive background screening as well as psychological testing for those wishing to enter the seminary.
- Bishops are meeting with victims.
- In the United States, Safe Environment training is taking place in 193 dioceses. Millions of adults have been trained to recognize the behavior of offenders and what to do about it.
- Millions of children have been equipped with the skills to help them protect themselves from abuse.
- Background checks are conducted on all Church personnel who have contact with children.
- Over 2 million volunteers and employees, 52,000 clerics, and 6,205 candidates for ordination have had their backgrounds evaluated.
- All dioceses/eparchies have Codes of Conduct spelling out what is acceptable behavior.
- These codes of conduct serve to let people know what can and cannot be done as well as letting others know what behavior can be expected. It encourages the reporting of suspicious behavior.

- All dioceses/eparchies have Victim Assistance Coordinators, assuring victims that they will be heard. In 2011, \$6,142,810 was spent on therapy for the victims of clergy sexual abuse.
- Also in 2011, at least \$32,725,511 was spent for child protection efforts such as training programs and background checks.
- All dioceses/eparchies have Safe Environment Coordinators who assure the ongoing compliance to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.
- Dioceses/eparchies have Healing Masses, retreats for victim/survivors and other reconciliation events.

### **Statistics**

- A total of 16,324 victims/survivors made allegations of sexual abuse by a cleric from 1950-2011.
- A total of 5,375 clerics were accused from 1950-2011.