

Diocese Moves Ahead with Anti-Abuse Campaign

Local Efforts Comply with Bishops' Charter to Protect Children

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio released, Jan. 6, a summary report, issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, on the Diocese of Brooklyn's compliance with the 17 articles contained in the bishops' 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The report found the Diocese "compliant with the provisions of the charter," with a commendation given to one of its initiatives and recommendations for additional attention on four aspects of the diocesan response to the charter.

At the same time, the USCCB's Office of Child and Youth Protection released its first annual report on the implementation of the charter by the 195 (arch)dioceses and Eastern Church eparchies in the country at a Washington press conference.

The report covered the period between June 2002, when the bishops signed the charter, and November of last year. The Gavin Group of Boston, an independent firm comprised of experienced compliance auditors, surveyed the (arch)dioceses and eparchies.

A three-member auditing team conducted the review in the Brooklyn Diocese Oct. 6-10, examining records and interviewing diocesan officials, persons representing the diocesan review board, victims and law enforcement, and others.

The auditors pursued their work in the week that followed Bishop

DiMarzio's Oct. 3 installation as the seventh Bishop of Brooklyn.

In its report, the team gave a commendation to the Diocese for the decade-long existence of a committee, formed by now-retired Bishop Thomas V. Daily, consisting of "diverse individuals empowered to act as a board of consultants to advise the bishop on matters of sexual abuse and the charter," in the words of the report.

The committee continues to serve Bishop DiMarzio, as does the eight-member diocesan review board, established by Bishop Daily last February in response to the charter's directives.

According to the summary report, the team recommended further action on four charter issues, one of which has been addressed and three others that are in development.

Already completed is a comprehensive job description exclusively for the position of full-time victim assistance coordinator, a position held on a part-time basis since last February by Amityville Dominican Sister Ellen Patricia Finn, associate executive director of Catholic Charities.

On two of the recommendations, regarding the promulgating of standards of ministerial behavior and the implementing of a background screening process, Bishop DiMarzio released information about both in a letter to be sent to

diocesan clergy this week.

The Bishop said he will require all clergy to sign a Code of Pastoral Conduct which he recently approved. It was developed by a committee, consisting of priest, Religious and lay members, which he assembled shortly after he came to the Diocese in October.

He also announced that the Diocese will begin a background screening process for each person who regularly performs services and/or ministers in the Diocese. The screenings will begin first with clergy, and then will include members of religious communities and all employees and those volunteers who are in regular contact with minors.

"All will be required to take part in this or will have to discontinue their diocesan and/or parish service," he said.

Bishop DiMarzio is continuing to address a fourth recommendation, concerning a "safe environment" training program. A separate letter to the Bishop from the Gavin Group said "you have made admirable progress in your training program, with the exception of training for children and young people."

The Bishop said the Diocese is exploring a suitable safe environment training program for children.

Through Dec. 1, nearly 2,500 adults in leadership positions - clergy, teachers, social service workers, directors of religious education, pastoral associates and

youth ministers among them - had received training through the Virtus program on sexual abuse awareness and prevention.

In his letter to clergy, Bishop DiMarzio said that Virtus training is required for all priests, deacons, teachers, employees, volunteers and all who have regular contact with minors.

He announced that four additional training sessions have been scheduled for next month for adults who were unable to attend those conducted late last year.

Two Sessions Scheduled

Two will be offered at the Immaculate Conception Center, Douglaston, Tuesday, Feb. 10, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. and from 6:30 to 10 p.m. On the following day, two sessions will be conducted at Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish hall, Brooklyn, from 8:30 a.m. till noon and from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Paul J. Ashton of Virtus, a clinical pastoral counselor, will provide the training, said Sister Jane Scanlon, C.N.D., Vice Chancellor, who is coordinating the sessions.

A separate, expanded report of the commendation given to the Diocese by the auditing team stated that "the Vicar General (Msgr. Otto L. Garcia) should also be commended for his long-standing leadership that can only be viewed as exemplary."

Most Dioceses Are Complying with Sex Abuse Norms

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recommendations, but he said he believed they would be adopted - if not in their entirety, "at least in substance."

The audit consisted of two main sections: a 30-page national report with an executive summary of the study, a report on the audit structure and procedures, an overall analysis of the findings and the general recommendations to the bishops' conference; and a 388-page section on the audits themselves, summarizing the findings in each diocese.

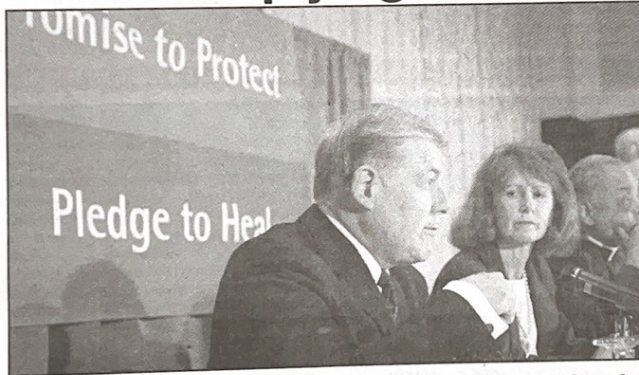
In the initial on-site audits, conducted by the Boston-based Gavin Group between June and November, a little more than one-fourth of dioceses were in full compliance on everything. Another two-fifths were basically in compliance but received one or more recommendations to improve their policies or practices in certain areas.

About one-third were given instructions on changes they needed to make in order to come into compliance with the 2002 charter. Many of those that received instructions on some elements of the charter received recommendations to improve their policies or practices in other areas as well.

The report said recommendations were given instead of instructions when implementation of a particular article was "incomplete" or when "significant improvement" could be made by an additional or changed procedure.

The report also noted that many dioceses received commendations for the quality of their programs prior to adoption of the charter or for notable actions such as "exemplary pastoral outreach and candid, educational communications." Of the 191 dioceses audited, 129, or 68%, received one or more commendations.

By the time follow-up reports on audit compliance - and, in three cases, re-audits - were completed near the end of 2003, only 20 of the dioceses that received instructions had not yet taken



UPDATE: Auditor William A. Gavin explains the results of a nationwide review of diocesan practices and policies mandated by the U.S. bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." Looking on is Kathleen McChesney, executive director of the bishops' Office for Child and Youth Protection. At right, Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, listens to a question during the press conference.



remedial action to correct their noncompliance in those areas.

An additional 14 had not yet implemented recommendations for improvement in one or more areas. The recommendations meant the diocese was basically in compliance with the charter but could do a better job by making some changes in certain areas.

Any corrective actions taken or reported after Dec. 12, 2003, missed the deadline for inclusion in the report.

Of the 195 U.S. dioceses and eparchies, 191 were audited.

The report says the Diocese of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Armenian Catholic Exarchate of U.S.A. and Canada were not audited due to scheduling difficulties, but they are scheduled for audits this year.

The Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, was "cooperative," but the nature of current

litigation it faced led the auditor and bishop to agree "that a full and fair review could not be completed without interference from outside entities," the report said.

The California-based Chaldean Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle, just formed in July 2002, was not included in the first round of audits.

The report also noted that three Latin-rite and three Eastern-rite dioceses did not participate in the nationwide survey by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice on the nature and scope of clergy sexual abuse of minors in the last 50 years. A report on the John Jay survey is scheduled for release in late February.

Those not participating in the John Jay survey were the dioceses of Davenport, Iowa; Fresno, Calif.; Lincoln, Neb.; Newton, Mass. (Melkite); Our Lady

of Deliverance in New Jersey (Syriac); and St. Maron of Brooklyn, N.Y. (Maronite).

In the audit report, two areas proved particularly difficult for dioceses to comply fully with charter requirements: implementation of safe environment programs across the diocese, and full background checks on all diocesan employees and volunteers who work with minors.

A complete safe environment program would include training sessions for all Church employees and volunteers on the Church's abuse policies, appropriate boundaries to maintain in dealing with minors, and how to recognize and report signs of possible sexual abuse. It would also include parish-based education on sexual abuse for parents and other adults and age-appropriate education for children and youth on recognizing improper conduct and reporting it.

Put Out Into the Deep

Lessons of the Year of the Monkey



Bishop DiMarzio

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Last week marked the beginning of the Lunar New Year celebrated by many of our Oriental brothers and sisters, especially the Chinese and Vietnamese Catholics in our Diocese. This is the "Year of the Monkey." In each cycle of 12 years, a different animal symbolizes each year. In my homily to the Vietnamese Catholic community last Sunday, I spoke about the three most famous monkeys known universally throughout the world. They are "hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil." Yes, these three famous monkeys can and do remind us of what we must negatively not do as humans. However, on the positive side there is much good that we must accomplish.

I used the example of the late Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan who when named Archbishop of Saigon was not allowed to occupy his See, but rather spent 13 years in a Vietnamese prison, nine of which were spent in solitary confinement. During those long years of confinement, Archbishop Van Thuan wrote his prison meditations. There are 999 of them in a book entitled "The Road of Hope." I remembered reading in "The Road of Hope" a similar interpretation regarding the three monkeys and I luckily found it.

Cardinal Van Thuan wrote: "Some people close their eyes in order to avoid looking, some people turn their faces away in order to avoid seeing, some people stop their ears in order to avoid hearing, some people turn a deaf ear in order not to hear. But truth is still truth. Look clearly, listen carefully, learn from reality, learn from others. Reality is the lesson, your neighbour is your teacher." How important it is that instead of avoiding evil that we do good. It is the lesson of our Christian faith that we can take to heart as we celebrate with our Oriental brothers and sisters the beginning of the Lunar New Year. We take this opportunity to wish them the peace and happiness of the New Year, which they have begun together.

I met Cardinal Van Thuan personally in Vietnam, and later visited him many times when he went to Rome to become eventually the head of the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace. Someday I hope that this great man of the Church will be recognized as a confessor of the faith and the white martyr that he was and be elevated to the glories of the altar. If you wish to learn more about the late Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, a new book written by Dr. Andre Nguyen Van Chau has been recently published by the Pauline Books and Media of Boston. Dr. Van Chau is also a longtime friend and one who knew the late Cardinal personally. The book is enti-

tled "The Miracle of Hope: Political Prisoner, Prophet of Peace." The book gives a great insight not only into the Cardinal's life, but also the Catholicity of Vietnam.

Before I close I want to recount an interesting incident that happened as I was on my way to the Bishops' annual retreat in Florida. I was at the airport waiting for the plane and somehow I was seated near the passengers who needed special help boarding the plane. There were six wheelchairs lined up near where I was seated. I was not wearing my pectoral cross since it would have set off the security alarm, but a woman in one of the chairs motioned to me to come over to her and as I approached she said to me, "Are you putting out into the deep?" She had recognized me and said she read my weekly column. We never know when or where we might be asked to put out into the deep. I responded to her that I was indeed going on retreat and hopefully I would deepen my spiritual awareness of the Lord's call to me. I wished her well on her trip to Florida. As a recent widow, she asked for my prayers to cope with a new life that now would be hers.

The twists and turns of life always challenge us to put out into the deep and learn from our past experiences.

Diocese Sets Four Child Protection Workshops

Close to 750 clergy, Religious and laity have registered to attend "VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children" awareness training workshops set for Feb. 10 and 11 at sites in Douglaston and Bay Ridge.

The sessions are designed to educate adults about how abusers groom potential victims and their families, ways to prevent abuse and methods for properly reporting suspicions of abuse, said Sister Jane Seanlon, C.N.D., Vice Chancellor. She chairs the Diocesan Committee on Education Toward Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Abuse.

Dr. Paul J. Ashton, who has led "Protecting God's Children" workshops in a number of U.S. dioceses, will conduct the sessions.

Two workshops will be offered at the Immaculate Conception Center, Douglaston, Feb. 10 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. and from 6:30 to 10 p.m. Sister Jane said 375 have registered for the afternoon session, making it virtually filled, and 141 are enrolled in the evening program.

On Feb. 11, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Basilica in Bay

Ridge will host two sessions, one from 8:30 a.m. till noon and the other from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio is among the 122 persons registered for the morning session and 96 are enrolled in the afternoon program.

Persons seeking to attend a workshop must register online on the VIRTUS Web site at www.virtus.org. Anyone who encounters difficulties in registering online may receive assistance by calling the Office of Human Resources at (718) 965-7362.

The workshops are a response to article 12 of the U.S. bishops' 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which called for "safe environment" programs that "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 sexual abuse."

Last year, 2,530 adults attended workshops conducted in the Diocese, Sister Jane said. Seven sessions sponsored by the diocesan committee between February and October drew 1,800 partici-

pants, including pastors, principals, parochial vicars, parish staffs and teachers.

Programs conducted by Catholic Charities, which reached 730 persons, used a model developed by Fordham University that was augmented by VIRTUS materials.

Representatives of VIRTUS also held two two-and-a-half-day facilitators training workshops that prepared 29 persons in the diocese to give safe environment sessions in parishes, clusters of parishes and other groups.

In a letter sent to clergy this month, Bishop DiMarzio said VIRTUS training was required for all priests, deacons, teachers, employees, volunteers and "all who have regular contact with minors."

The VIRTUS program was created by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group in Lisle, Ill., "to protect children and others who interact with the Church by preventing wrongdoing and promoting best management practices," according to Jack McCalmon, who directs VIRTUS's programs and services.



Bishop DiMarzio's Calendar

Sunday, Feb. 1 - 9 a.m., Mass, St. Brigid Church, Brooklyn.
- 2 p.m., Black History Month Mass, St. James Cathedral Basilica, Brooklyn.

Monday, Feb. 2 - Catholic Schools Week school visits, Queens South Vicariate: 9 a.m., St. Camillus, Rockaway Park; 10 a.m., St. Virgilius, Broad Channel; 11 a.m., Our Lady of Grace, Howard Beach.
- 6 p.m., Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting, 310 Prospect Park West.

Tuesday, Feb. 3 - Catholic Schools Week school visits, Brooklyn East Vicariate: 9 a.m., Mary Queen of Heaven, Mill Basin; 10 a.m., Our Lady of Miracles, Canarsie; 11 a.m., St. Therese of Lisieux, East Flatbush.
- 6 p.m., Brooklyn Borough President reception to welcome Bishop, Borough Hall.

Wednesday, Feb. 4 - 3 p.m., Vicariate celebration, 7:30 p.m. Mass, St. James Cathedral Basilica.

Thursday, Feb. 5 - 3 p.m., Vicariate celebration, 7:30 p.m., Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Brooklyn.

Friday, Feb. 6 - 12 p.m., Futures in Education "Principal for a Day" luncheon, Brooklyn.

Saturday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m., Confirmation, St. Matthias Church, Ridgewood.
- 5:30 p.m., Mass, Immaculate Conception Church, Jamaica.

Utah Churches Are Declared Gun-Free Zones

SALT LAKE CITY (CNS) - Salt Lake City's Catholic bishop and more than 30 other religious leaders have told Utah government officials it is not the state's place to make policy for churches, synagogues, mosques, temples or the ward houses of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - even when it comes to a law allowing people to carry concealed weapons.

At a December press conference, Bishop George H. Niederauer and other religious leaders responded

to a new state requirement that religious communities must register with a state agency if they intend to keep their houses of worship free from the intrusion of weapons.

A joint statement from the religious leaders said, "Anyone who attends any of our services carrying a concealed weapon under any law allowing them to do so will be asked to leave our property and return only after safely storing that weapon elsewhere."