

Diocese Found in Compliance With Child Protection Audit

The Gavin Group, Inc., a Boston-based independent firm headed by William A. Gavin, a retired FBI official, reported that the Diocese of Brooklyn continues to be in full compliance with the requirements of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

This is the second audit of the diocese, and the second time it has been found in full compliance. The most recent audit covered the period from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. The results are based on an exhaustive review by the independent professional auditing firm of policies, and documents, and interviews with diocesan officials, parish and community members, and civil officials.

"The safety of children is my highest priority," says Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio. "We will continue to insist that our parishes, schools, and institutions continue to ensure a Safe Environment. I remain grateful to the many qualified and committed lay people who help to implement our program, and for the cooperation and enthusiasm of our priests, deacons, religious, lay employees, and volunteers."

Vigilant Protectors of Youth

"We will continue to be vigilant in

the protection of our young people," Bishop DiMarzio said. "I am convinced that there is no other institution doing more than the Catholic Church to protect children."

The auditors looked again at the adequacy of such things as: policies for responding to complaints; outreach to victims; the work done by the Diocesan Lay Review Board; independence and use of lay review boards; policies for removing priests who have abused the innocent; and the parish, school, and diocesan compliance with the Safe Environment programs.

The report affirms that the diocese continues to respond swiftly to all allegations, reaches out pastorally to victims, reports all allegations to public authorities, conducts an investigations with the help of the Lay Review Board, and has implemented a comprehensive Safe Environment Program.

The diocese has established clear and well-publicized standards of ministerial behavior for priests and deacons. A communications policy remains in effect which reflects the bishop's pledge to be open and transparent on issues regarding the sexual abuse of children.

The diocese assists and supports all parish communities directly affected

by ministerial misconduct involving minors.

There is no priest or deacon serving in the diocese who has had a credible allegation of sexual abuse made against him. The diocese has not allowed the transfer of any priest or deacon who has had a credible allegation of sexual abuse made against him to another diocese for residence since the passing of the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Clear Standards of Conduct

The Diocese has clear and well publicized standards of conduct for persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse. It conducts background evaluations for all diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors, using

appropriate law enforcement resources where permissible. It also employs adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination.

Furthermore, Bishop DiMarzio has a standing offer to meet with any victim who has reported an allegation of abuse. The bishop or his delegates inform communities in which the sexual abuse occurred and provide support services for those in need.

The diocese has a mechanism in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor occurred. It also has a victim assistance coordinator, Sister Ellen Patricia Finn, O.P., who is a licensed certified social worker with extensive experience dealing with victims of sexual abuse.

Abuse Crisis Demands Transparency of Church

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The clerical sex abuse crisis was a serious proving ground for the Catholic Church and its commitment to be open and honest with the world about the failures of its members, said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman.

"There was a great loss of trust in the church – partially justified, partially caused by a negative and incomplete presentation of the problem – but this damage, as the pope said, can be overcome with good if we move in the direction of a profound purification and renewal" so that no one is ever again abused by a priest or church worker, he said.

Father Lombardi, who directs the Vatican press office, Vatican Radio and the Vatican television center, said the only way to promote church unity in the midst of controversies and protect the freedom of expression and truth in the church is to be credible and transparent.



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