



April 7, 2006 - Archdiocese of Boston Shares 'Children First'- A Two-Year Assessment of the Archdiocese's Implementation of the Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children

Cardinal Seán Initiates Plan for Measuring the Effectiveness of the RCAB's Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Programs

(Brighton, Mass.) April 7, 2006...The Archdiocese of Boston today announced that it has released "Children First"- A Two-Year Assessment of the Implementation of the Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children. Cardinal Sean initiated this assessment, a comprehensive analysis of the Archdiocese's response to the clergy sexual abuse crisis, in November of 2004 per the policies promulgated by the Archdiocese in 2003. The Archdiocese also announced that it has released 'An Action Plan for Preparing a Methodology for Assessing the Effectiveness of RCAB Programs for Child Protection and Abuse Prevention.' Both the "Children First" report and action plan are available on the Archdiocese's website at <http://rcab.org/ChildAdvocacy/assessment-060407.html>

The two-year assessment was performed by the Implementation and Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC) and the Review Board in conjunction with the Archdiocese's Office of Child Advocacy, Implementation and Oversight. The IOAC, chaired by M.J. Doherty, Ph.D., and the Review Board, chaired by the Honorable Mary Fitzpatrick, L.L.B., J.D., are predominantly comprised of lay professionals who are or have been affiliated with state child abuse prevention agencies, local colleges and law enforcement. In preparing this report, IOAC and Review Board members conducted numerous interviews including interviews of survivors of clergy sexual abuse, parents and families of survivors, pastors, members of parish Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) teams and other involved parties.

The main objectives of the review were a) to assess the implementation of the Archdiocese's 'Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children' and b) to recommend revisions to existing policies and procedures as well as to identify additional ways in which the Archdiocese could improve its child protection and survivor outreach efforts. In addition to providing a comprehensive evaluation of what the Archdiocese has accomplished so far and examining the challenges it faces going forward, the report also includes 22 specific recommendations for change in policy or in practice.

"I wish to express my deep gratitude to those who generously gave their time and talents to this important review process," stated Cardinal Sean O'Malley. "Through their diligent work, we now have a clearer understanding of what we have accomplished and what more needs to be done to strengthen both our child protection programs and our outreach to those who have been harmed as a result of clergy sexual abuse. The findings and recommendations provided will serve to guide our ongoing efforts. I remain committed to doing everything possible to ensure that no child is ever harmed again." Cardinal Sean will review the report and will seek reaction and counsel from clergy and the faithful as well as from the broader community in order to gain additional insights and suggestions. It is expected that Cardinal Sean will make a final decision this summer as to how best to respond to and address the report's findings and recommendations.

The Archdiocese also released an action plan that has been developed to guide the efforts of a newly formed subcommittee of the IOAC, which will study how to measure the overall effectiveness of the Archdiocese's policies and procedures and other programs that have been established to ensure the protection of children. Cardinal Sean recently formed the subcommittee, which is comprised of local and national experts in child abuse prevention as well as experts drawn from higher education, child advocacy organizations, state government, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, private industry, and other relevant professions and agencies.