



## January 6, 2004 - USCCB Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

### Section II: Summary Reports of Dioceses and Eparchies

#### ARCHDIOCESE OF Boston, Massachusetts

See January 06, 2004 - Statement of Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley on the USCCB Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

The Archdiocese of Boston ("the Archdiocese"), which was established as a diocese in 1808 and was designated an archdiocese in 1875, encompasses five Massachusetts counties. It consists of 357 parishes, two seminaries, and 131 schools; 246 deacons and 887 diocesan priests serve a population of 2,088,089 registered Catholics. The Most Reverend Sean Patrick O'Malley, who was installed as archbishop on July 30, 2003, leads the Archdiocese. A compliance audit of the Archdiocese was conducted during the period of October 27-31, 2003. The information set forth below represents conditions as they were found to exist during the week of the audit. Information regarding necessary corrective actions taken by the Diocese subsequent to the audit will be found in the last paragraph.

### FINDINGS

#### To Promote Healing and Reconciliation

The Archdiocese has established an outreach program. The Archdiocese was commended for certain innovative aspects of this program, detailed below. However, it was recommended that the Archdiocese extend the outreach effort to those victims/survivors newly accessible due to the cessation of civil litigation. Prior to and continuing since June 2002, the ordinaries of the Archdiocese, or their designees, have met or offered to meet with victims/survivors of abuse in the Archdiocese. The victim assistance coordinator is Barbara Thorpe, a licensed social worker, who is director of the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach. The archdiocesan review board was established in 1993 and its responsibilities were redefined in 2003. The board consists of nine members, including one priest and eight respected members of the lay community. The board's responsibilities appeared to overlap those of a second body, the implementation and oversight committee.

It was recommended that the respective roles and responsibilities of these two entities be clarified and documented. The procedures for making a complaint of abuse are set forth in a policy and procedures booklet, but they are not readily available to the general population of the Archdiocese. Such a document is in the process of being prepared. It was recommended that the Archdiocese prepare and distribute a more easily understood document containing the procedures for making a complaint of sexual abuse. There have been no confidentiality agreements entered into by the Archdiocese since June 2002.

#### To Guarantee Effective Response to Allegations of Abuse of a Minor

The Archdiocese has established effective liaison with local civil authorities, ensuring for now and the future an open dialogue regarding sexual abuse allegations. It was recommended that a record-keeping system be developed to document the reporting of all allegations to the office of the attorney general. The Archdiocese has a procedure in place to advise victims/survivors of their right to report allegations of abuse by a member of the clergy to civil authorities. The Archdiocese established a clear code of conduct for priests and deacons in October 2003. It was recommended that the Archdiocese expedite the process of bringing this code to the attention of all relevant church personnel. The Archdiocese has a communications policy that reflects the archbishop's pledge to be open and transparent on issues regarding the sexual abuse of children.

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### **To Ensure Accountability of Procedures**

The Archdiocese has participated in the research study regarding the "nature and scope" of the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

### **To Protect the Faithful in the Future**

The Archdiocese has selected and implemented the VIRTUS safe environment program, consisting of presentations to all archdiocesan and parish personnel having regular contact with children. Children are being given presentations based on the program "Talking About Touching." The Archdiocese was commended for the aggressiveness of its effort, which has a goal of training 200,000 people by the end of 2003. The Archdiocese has established standards of conduct for priests and deacons, as well as diocesan employees, volunteers, and any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people; however, a Recommendation was made that the standards be promptly disseminated to all relevant personnel. The Archdiocese is conducting background investigations for all clergy and employees who have regular contact with minors. A Recommendation was made that this procedure be carried out for all volunteers having contact with minors. The Archdiocese has not transferred any priest or deacon who has had a credible allegation of sexual abuse lodged against him since June 2002 to another diocese for ministerial assignment. In the cases of 12 priests who have transferred to other dioceses since June 2002 for residency purposes, the arch bishop has sent letters to the bishops of those dioceses, confidentially providing all information relating to allegations of sexual abuse of a child by the priests. The archbishop, or his delegate, and the major superiors have coordinated their respective roles regarding issues of allegations of sexual abuse made against a cleric member of a religious institute. The Archdiocese has cooperated extensively with other churches, government agencies, professional associations, and institutions of learning in conducting research in the area of sexual abuse of minors. The Archdiocese has established screening and evaluative techniques in the selection of candidates for ordination.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THE**

### **PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER**

At the conclusion of this audit, the Archdiocese of Boston was issued seven Recommendations and two Commendations.

**RECOMMENDATION 1-** That the Archdiocese initiate efforts to appoint a qualified individual to coordinate the implementation of measures being taken to bring the Archdiocese into full compliance with the Charter .

**RECOMMENDATION 2-** That the Archdiocese extend outreach to those victims/survivors whose identities have recently become known through the civil litigation process.

**RECOMMENDATION 3-** That the Archdiocese clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the lay review board and the implementation and oversight committee.

**RECOMMENDATION 4-** That the procedures for making a complaint of sexual abuse be made more readily available to the general population.

**RECOMMENDATION 5-** That a record-keeping system be established for the purpose of documenting all allegations of sexual abuse that have been reported to the office of the attorney general.

**RECOMMENDATION 6-** That the Archdiocese expedite the process of bringing its code of ministerial behavior to the attention of all relevant church personnel.



**RECOMMENDATION 7**-That the Archdiocese ensure that background investigations are performed for volunteers who have regular contact with minors.

**COMMENDATION 1** - For the excellence of the Archdiocese's outreach program, which has included such innovative measures as the sponsoring of a national conference of mental health professionals to deal with issues related to sexual abuse by the clergy, and the establishment of a support group for the parents of individuals sexually abused by the clergy.

**COMMENDATION 2** - For the Archdiocese's aggressive efforts to ensure that 200,000 persons in the Archdiocese receive safe environment training by the end of 2003.

As of December 1, 2003, Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 had been addressed. Recommendations 4 and 5 were in the process of being addressed but had not been completely addressed. The Archdiocese of Boston is compliant with the Charter, as measured by the process described in Chapter 2 in Section I.

The compliance audit measured activity that has occurred since the adoption of the Charter in June 2002 with the exception of certain mandated actions found in Articles 5 and 14. Actions taken by the diocese/eparchy) prior to June 2002 to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests and deacons are not included in this summary report.

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