

# Protecting Children and Young People

*The 2007 Albany Diocese Report*

Since 2002, when the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the historic "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," the Albany Diocese has been a leader in implementing reforms to protect children and in reaching out with compassion and meaningful assistance to those who have suffered as a result of the tragedy of clergy sexual abuse.

Although substantial progress has been made, our work is not done. The Church has continuing moral obligations to foster healing and reconciliation among all who may have suffered; to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the measures we have implemented to prevent any form of abuse of children, and to encourage any victims who may not yet have reported their abuse to come forward so they may receive help and support.

The Albany Diocese has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse of minors by clergy. No priest or deacon whom the Diocese determines sexually abused a minor at any time is permitted to remain in public ministry.

In keeping with our commitment to transparency, this is the Albany Diocese's fifth public report on its response to the clergy sexual abuse crisis.\*

## Responding With Compassion

Since 2002, Theresa F. Rodrigues, a psychiatric social worker experienced in helping sexual abuse victims, has served as the Diocese's assistance coordinator. The Diocese encourages anyone who as a minor was sexually abused by a priest or deacon of the Albany Diocese to report the abuse to a law enforcement agency or to Ms. Rodrigues at 518-453-6646 or at [assistance.coordinator@rcda.org](mailto:assistance.coordinator@rcda.org)

### For Help or More Information



**Theresa Rodrigues,  
Assistance Coordinator**

518-453-6646  
[assistance.coordinator@rcda.org](mailto:assistance.coordinator@rcda.org)  
Diocesan Pastoral Center  
40 North Main Ave.  
Albany, NY 12203

The Albany Diocese conducts thorough investigations of all complaints it receives of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. The results of these investigations are reviewed by the Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Review Board, which is made up principally of lay people not employed by the Diocese. Nine allegations against seven priests were received in 2007. Eight of the allegations were against deceased priests or priests who had already left active ministry before the allegations were received. These allegations occurred between 25 and 45 years ago. On the ninth allegation, one priest was removed from active ministry following his

arrest in 2007 on a charge that he possessed child pornography. His case is pending in federal court.

The Review Board reached determinations in 2007 on completed investigations of 14 complaints. Reasonable grounds to believe the allegations were found in nine cases. In two other cases, the Review Board found no reasonable grounds to believe the allegations. The board determined no further action could be taken on three allegations because of insufficient information to conduct an investigation.

## ALBANY DIOCESE TAKES ACTION

- **49,000 children trained in age-appropriate safety programs**
- **20,000 clergy, employees and volunteers trained to keep children safe**
- **16,500 background checks completed on clergy, employees and volunteers**

In 2007, the Diocese provided a total of \$1,010,500 in assistance to 16 individuals, either through agreements reached by the Independent Mediation Assistance Program or directly from the Diocese. The Albany Diocese's total costs associated with the clergy sexual abuse issue in 2007, including the assistance to the 16 individuals; Diocesan-wide training, education and prevention programs; legal and other professional services, were \$1.45 million. In total since 1950, the Diocese has spent or committed more than \$8 million to assist individuals who as minors were sexually abused by Diocesan clergy. This assistance is provided through the Diocese's self-insurance fund.

The Independent Mediation Assistance Program, announced in December 2003 and implemented in September 2004, concluded much of its work in 2006, and completed several remaining mediations in 2007. From its start, IMAP has provided 44 individuals with assistance to take the next step in their lives and in many cases to obtain medical care, personal psychotherapy, family counseling, job training, debt repayment, education or other services. Funds that remain after completion of IMAP will be reserved to assist other victims. The Diocese continues to assist victims through the office of Assistance Coordinator Theresa Rodrigues.

## Preventive Measures in Place

The Albany Diocese instituted a comprehensive program in 2002 to ensure that children and young people are safe in all Catholic places throughout the Diocese, building on preventive measures that were already in place.

- The Diocese requires candidates for the priesthood to undergo a comprehensive seminarian formation program, including an evaluation by medical professionals and a panel of lay people to identify psychological issues and assess psychosexual maturity, among other characteristics.
- The Diocese has trained more than 49,000 children in age-appropriate safety programs. It has provided more than 20,000 Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers with training in how to protect children and maintain safe environments. It has conducted background checks on more than 16,500 Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers.
- The Diocese developed a safety training program for children in religious education and youth ministry programs that is regarded as the prevailing "best practice" in its field and was adopted by other dioceses, including the New York Archdiocese, the Syracuse Diocese and the Portland, Maine, Diocese. The Albany Diocese also adopted a program called "Breaking the Silence" to provide increased awareness and training for high-school students in Catholic Schools.

\* To view our 2003-2006 Annual Reports, please visit [www.rcda.org](http://www.rcda.org)

