

Protecting Children and Young People

The 2008 Albany Diocese Report

The Albany Diocese continues a concerted and proactive approach to ensuring Catholic places are among the safest places for children and young people.

In 2008, independent auditors concluded that the Albany Diocese was again in full compliance with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" adopted in 2002. Auditors have found the Diocese in full compliance every year since the Charter was adopted.

We continue our focus on prevention and education and are working diligently to ensure the measures already in place continue to be effective in preventing any form of abuse of children. The 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.

The Church also continues to reach out to victims and we again encourage any victims who may not yet have reported their abuse to come forward so they may receive help and support.

As the Albany Diocese has done for the past seven years, we hereby publish an annual report on our response to the clergy sexual abuse crisis. The report is part of the Diocese's commitment to transparency on clergy sexual abuse. The Annual Reports since 2003 are available online at www.rcda.org

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 and to Ms. Rodrigues at 518-453-6646 or at assistance.coordinator@rcda.org

For Help or More Information



Theresa Rodrigues,
Assistance Coordinator

518-453-6646
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. Six allegations against three priests were received in 2008. These allegations involved incidents said to have occurred between 15 and 39 years ago. One of the priests was deceased and another was already out of ministry when the allegations were received. The third priest was placed on administrative leave by Bishop Hubbard after an allegation was received.

The Review Board reached determinations in 2008 on completed investigations of three of the six complaints. Reasonable grounds to believe the allegations were found in those three cases, while no further action could be taken on the three other allegations because they are still under investigation by law enforcement authorities. The Albany Diocese forwards all allegations of clergy sex abuse to local law enforcement authorities, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred. The three priests against whom reasonable grounds to believe the allegations were found are no

ALBANY DIOCESE TAKES ACTION

- **52,000 children trained in safety programs**
- **23,000 clergy, employees and volunteers trained**
- **21,500 background checks completed**

longer in public ministry. One was deceased when the allegation was received; a second had already been removed from ministry based on a finding of Reasonable Grounds to believe a prior allegation; and the third, who had been placed on administrative leave, was removed from ministry when the Review Board reached its determination.

In 2008, the Diocese provided a total of \$548,530 in assistance to 13 individuals, either through agreements reached by the Independent Mediation Assistance Program or through agreements made directly with the Diocese. This amount also includes counseling and emergency assistance given to victims. The Albany Diocese's total costs associated with the clergy sexual abuse issue in 2008, including the assistance to the 13 individuals; Diocesan-wide training, education and prevention programs; legal and other professional services, were \$897,689.42. 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 a few remaining mediations were completed in 2008. From its start, IMAP has provided 47 individuals with assistance to take the next step in their lives and in many cases to obtain medical care, psychotherapy, family counseling, job training, debt repayment, education or other services. Funds that remain after completion of IMAP were 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.
- Since 2002, more than 52,000 children in Diocesan programs have been trained in age-appropriate safety programs sponsored by the Diocese or public schools. The Diocese has provided more than 23,000 Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers with training in how to protect children and maintain safe environments; and has conducted background checks on more than 21,500 Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers.
- The Diocese has developed a Parent Fact Sheet. This sheet informs parents about child sexual abuse prevention, commonly used lures to ensnare children, and Internet safety. It also recommends steps to take if a child does report abuse. This Parent Fact Sheet is available both in English and Spanish and is posted on the Diocesan Web site at: www.rcda.org/Safe_Place.html



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* To view our 2003-2008 Annual Reports, please visit www.rcda.org