

July 2015 - June 2016 Annual Report

Protecting Children & Young People

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany enforces a zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse of minors by clergy or employees, and publicly reports the names of clergy who have been credibly accused of abusing a minor at any time in the past.

The Diocese's comprehensive approach to this issue is focused on three key objectives: preventing abuse today and in the future; providing compassionate and meaningful support to survivors; and punishing abusers. Sexual abuse of minors is an egregious sin and a crime, and we report all allegations to law enforcement.

In keeping with our transparency in addressing this important issue, this annual report provides a public accounting of incidents of clergy sexual abuse of minors in the Albany Diocese. The Diocese has published annual reports since 2002, and includes a list of all credibly accused clergy on its website. This report encompasses the period from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, following the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' national reporting timeframe, which is a July – June annual period.

No priest or deacon determined to have sexually abused a minor at any time is permitted to remain in ministry, nor can he be transferred into, out of, or within the Diocese. Any employee who is determined to have sexually abused a minor will also be removed by the Diocese. There are no priests or deacons in ministry nor any employees serving the Diocese today whom the Diocese has determined sexually abused a minor at any time.

All allegations of clergy sexual abuse, regardless of when the incident was alleged to have occurred, are reported to law enforcement agencies and the Diocese cooperates fully in their investigations.

Preventing abuse is as important as punishing those who have abused in the past, and for more than a decade, we have conducted mandatory background checks on priests, deacons, employees and volunteers who interact with children.

We also ensure age-appropriate training programs are provided to children, parents,

To report sexual abuse:

- Contact any law enforcement agency;
- Contact Albany Diocese Assistance Coordinator Sabrina Balbuena at (518) 453-6646 or at assistance.coordinator@rcda.org

teachers and volunteers, so they can recognize the warning signs and protect themselves and others.

The Diocese is also committed to providing meaningful support to survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The Church has apologized to victims, and has provided counseling and emergency assistance, and continues to do so. The Diocesan Assistance Coordinator is dedicated to working with individuals who were abused as minors, no matter when the abuse occurred.

Since 2002, the Albany Diocese has undergone multiple independent audits, all of which have found the Diocese in full compliance with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

During the 12 months covered by this report, eight allegations of sexual misconduct against a minor were received. Five of the eight accused were identified by the individuals bringing forth the allegations, and all five had previously been removed from ministry based on earlier reports of abuse. Three other reports were brought forward where the identity of the accused was not provided.

Consistent with our policy, all allegations where information was available were referred immediately to the District Attorneys' offices in the counties where the incidents were alleged to have occurred. The DA's offices determined the allegations were beyond the applicable statute of limitations, at which point the Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Review Board initiated its own investigations into the allegations.

The Review Board was unable to obtain sufficient information relating to allegations

against five priests. With limited information provided by the individuals who initially made the allegations, the Review Board determined no further action could be taken until new information was received. One allegation was referred to another Diocese, and investigations into the remaining two allegations against priests who were previously removed from ministry based on earlier reports of abuse, were continuing at the end of this reporting period.

Beyond investigating and responding to allegations, the Diocese has focused on preventing abuse by educating children and adults, and embracing and enforcing clear practices to prevent sexual abuse.

During the 12 months from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, the Diocese updated background checks for adults who work for the Diocese or volunteer in programs where they interact with minors. While the Diocese conducts background checks on new employees or volunteers, updated checks are performed on a periodic basis for those who have gone through the system previously. A total of 3,239 adults underwent background checks for the period covered by this report.

The Diocese's safety training program — focused on identifying potential signs of abuse and how to limit opportunities for abuse — was also provided to those who had previously been trained, as well as new volunteers and employees. A total of 3,477 adults participated in this training.

Through various educational programs, tens of thousands of children across the Diocese receive age-appropriate safety training annually.

In addition, the Diocese provides assistance to victims through the office of the Diocesan Assistance Coordinator. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016, the Diocese provided \$35,265 in such assistance. This amount includes agreements reached, counseling and emergency assistance. The Diocese's total costs associated with clergy sexual abuse during the 12-month period (including assistance to individuals; Diocesan-wide training, education and prevention programs; legal and other professional services) were \$116,087.

To view a list of all clergy found to have abused minors while in ministry, click here: www.rcda.org/offenders



Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany
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