

Summary Report on the  
Implementation of the  
*Charter for the Protection  
of Children and Young People*

*Diocese of*  
**Covington, Kentucky**

The Diocese of Covington (“the Diocese”), which was originally established in 1853, encompasses 14 counties in northern Kentucky. It consists of 53 parishes and missions, 34 elementary and secondary schools, and one college and serves a population of about 89,000 registered Catholics with 24 deacons and 95 diocesan priests. The Most Reverend Roger J. Foys, installed as bishop in July 2002, leads the Diocese. A compliance audit of the Diocese was conducted during the period of August 4-9, 2003.

The information presented 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 Diocese has had a prevention policy on sexual abuse of minors since 1985; this policy provides for an outreach program designed to provide immediate pastoral care to victims/survivors and their families and is especially evidenced by the bishop’s personal contacts with victims/survivors as well as offenders. A Commendation was written recognizing the Diocese for having an innovative policy in place since 1985, with revisions in 1995 and 2000. The Diocese has a victim assistance coordinator, Chancellor Margaret M. Schack, who has both the education and experience to conduct this function. A lay review board, the diocesan committee for addressing sexual misconduct, consists of 12 respected members of the community, including a doctor, several attorneys, a Baptist minister, and other members with subject matter expertise; the board was established in 1994, and the Diocese was commended for this early formation. The procedures for making a complaint of abuse are readily available in printed form. The Diocese has entered into no confidentiality agreements since June 2002, unless requested by the victim/survivor.

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

The Diocese has established liaison with local civil authorities regarding sexual abuse violations and reports all allegations of abuse that are required by law, including all allegations of abuse of a minor. A Recommendation was written suggesting a change in policy that would make it a matter of public record that all allegations of abuse be reported to authorities, not just those required by law. There have been no allegations of abuse of a minor since June 2002. The Diocese has a procedure for advising victims/survivors of their right to report allegations of sexual abuse by a member of the clergy to civil authorities. The Diocese has established a clear and well-publicized code of conduct for priests and deacons. The Diocese has a basic communications policy

reflecting the Diocese's pledge to be open and transparent on issues regarding the sexual abuse of children.

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

The Diocese 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 Diocese has selected and will implement the VIRTUS safe environment training programs in the near future and is working with a local organization, the Women's Crisis Center, to develop additional child training with a parent component. A Recommendation was written to expedite this training. As mentioned above, the Diocese has publicized 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. The Diocese has completed background evaluations on all new employees and volunteers since 1988, but background evaluations have not been done for members of the clergy since their entry into the seminary. The background investigations include checks with the Kentucky State Police but not with the neighboring states of Ohio and Indiana. A Recommendation was written addressing these issues. The Diocese has not transferred any priests or deacons who have had credible allegations of sexual abuse lodged against them to any other diocese for ministerial assignment or residence since June 2002. The bishop and the major superiors of a orders having a presence in the Diocese have coordinated their respective roles regarding issues of allegations of sexual abuse made against a clerical member of a religious institute. The Diocese has not had an opportunity to cooperate with other churches, religious bodies, and institutions of learning in conducting research in the area of sexual abuse of minors. The Diocese has established screening and evaluative techniques in the selection of candidates for ordination and established ongoing formation programs for priests.

### **Compliance with the Provisions of the *Charter***

At the conclusion of this audit, the Diocese of Covington was issued three Recommendations and one Commendation.

RECOMMENDATION 1—That the Diocese consider making it a matter of public record, as part of its policy, that it will report all allegations of abuse to civil authorities, even though not required to do so by statute.

RECOMMENDATION 2—That diocesan personnel immediately begin implementing the VIRTUS training programs and expedite the development of additional training from the Women's Crisis Center.

RECOMMENDATION 3—That the Diocese perform background evaluations on all priests, deacons, diocesan employees, and volunteers, regardless of when they were hired, and include checks with neighboring states, where appropriate.

COMMENDATION—For the bishop’s pastoral outreach, for having a diocesan sexual abuse policy in place since 1985 with appropriate revisions, and for establishing its committee for addressing sexual abuse as early as 1994.

As of December 1, 2003, all Recommendations had been addressed. The Diocese of Covington is found to be compliant with the provisions of 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.***