



Protecting God's Children in the Diocese of Rockville Centre A Summary Report to the People of God February 16, 2006

"We must never cease to be vigilant regarding the sinful crime of sex abuse of children and minors while we are called by God himself to be instruments of forgiveness and reconciliation." - Bishop William Murphy

• **Gavin Group External Audit:**

- Compliance with Dallas Charter for Third Consecutive Year

Background: Independent auditors found the Diocese of Rockville Centre to be in full compliance with the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. A team of auditors spent five days on Long Island in October 2005 assessing diocesan implementation of the Charter.

• **VIRTUS Training:**

- 25,500 church personnel trained
- 140 facilitators trained
- 345 sessions held in 2005

Background: The word "virtus" derives from Latin, and means valor, moral strength, excellence and worth. Virtus denoted a way of life and manner of behavior that always aspired to the highest, most productive attributes of people and aspects of human interaction. The VIRTUS training program teaches church staff and volunteers how to be on the alert for cases of sexual abuse and how to report it. Created by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group, VIRTUS programs empower organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the church.

• **Limited Background Checks: 57,000+**

Background: The diocese is committed to conducting background checks on All Church personnel and volunteers. Since the program began, the diocese has completed over 57,000 criminal background checks of priests, deacons, religious and lay staff members and volunteers who serve in diocesan agencies or any of the 134 parishes in the diocese.

• **"Because We Care" Newsletter:**

- 3 issues published in 2005
- 60,000 copies of each issue distributed

Background: The Office for the Protection of Children and Young People has produced a series of three educational newsletters. Entitled, "Because We Care," they are provided to parents and volunteers throughout the diocese. They include articles by persons who have been abused, by law enforcement officers and by those who work with victims and their families. This newsletter may be downloaded here on our diocesan website.

• **Survivors Support Group: 1**

Background: In September 2004, the diocese began a support group for those who are victim survivors. Those who choose to participate in it are persons who are victim survivors who are seeking together to find ways to address their issues, to be helped by one another and by professionals and to build up hope for the future that support groups have succeeded in doing in many other cases in the past. For more information about this support group, contact Eileen Puglisi, director of the Office for the Protection of Children and Young People at 516-678-5800, ext. 573.

• **Spiritual Care Team: 3 priests and 2 Sisters**

Background: To help victims who wish to deepen their spiritual life, the diocese offers a Spiritual Care Team. Three priests and two Sisters have volunteered and have been given training to be able to offer spiritual counsel and direction to victims who wish for this type of care.

• **Interfaith Initiative: Partners in Protection**

Background: The diocese is partnering with other faith groups on Long Island to help address the issue of sex abuse. "Partners in Protection" is a partnership with churches, synagogues and mosques that seeks to utilize dialogue, sharing and learning to strengthen our response to child sex abuse, to reduce incidents and to increase our own efforts at prevention. More information on this is available on our diocesan website: drvc.org.

• **Satellite Office for the Protection of Children and Young People Established**

Background: To better serve Eastern Suffolk, the diocese established a second office at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish in Southampton. The office gives the diocese increased flexibility in offering spiritual and pastoral services to those who would find it difficult to make the trip in to Rockville Centre.

- **Mandatory Reporter of Accusations to Civil Authorities**

***Background:** The diocese continues to be a mandatory reporter to the civil authorities. The Office for the Protection of Children and Young People has very good relationships with both the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and the Nassau County District Attorney's Office. We look forward to continuing those relationships and we assure everyone that any allegation reported to this diocese is passed on to the civil authorities. The civil authorities know that it is our commitment to cooperate with them in any way possible.*