



The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Annual Report for Child Protection and Victim Assistance

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Words are never enough, but sometimes, words are all we have, or, at least sometimes we must begin with words. The first words I wish to speak tonight are to victims and their families. I am sorry - profoundly sorry for the terrible pain you have experienced because of sexual abuse.

On June 30, 2004, at the Cathedral of Saint Thomas More in Arlington, I began my homily at our first Mass to pray for victims of sexual abuse with the words cited above. It is very important to me that all who review the work of our diocese to protect children and provide healing and wholeness of victims and survivors know the depth of my sorrow at what has transpired in our Church. To those who are victim-survivors, I repeatedly say, I am especially sorry that someone you trusted has betrayed you and caused such pain and anguish by their actions. I particularly want to express my sorrow to those who have been abused by priests, deacons, religious men and women, volunteers and lay employees of the Church. You had a right to expect much more of us, as the Body of Christ, and we betrayed you. I ask for your forgiveness on behalf of the Church.

Pope Saint John Paul II has said, "There is no place in our church for those who abuse children." As your Bishop, I want you to know of my commitment to maintain a safe environment for children, implementing, with the collaboration of my staff, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

It is equally important that we reach out to victims and their families. In 2004, in order to assist victims in their journey toward reconciliation and healing, I appointed Mrs. Patricia Mudd, ACSW, as Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Arlington. Along with more than 30 years of experience serving Catholic Charities, Pat continues to bring a real commitment to support victims and their families. We have established a private and confidential phone line for the Victim Assistance Coordinator at (703) 841-2530. I encourage any victims or their families who wish to report an incident of abuse by clergy, religious men and women, or lay employees and volunteers of the Church, to call Pat; she and her colleague, Mrs. Rosa Colello, are ready to assist you.

This Child Protection and Victim Assistance Annual Report has been provided so that you may further understand the steps that we, as this Diocesan Church, are taking to protect our most valuable treasures, our children, and to mend the hearts and lives of the those wounded by sexual abuse. The Office of Child Protection, under the direction of Deacon Marques Silva, focuses not only on protecting children, but on helping all Church employees and volunteers have a long and fruitful relationship with the Church. This report provides a summary of our activities during the period of July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

To our victims and their families, I wish to extend an invitation to meet with you if you might find my spiritual assistance beneficial. I also offer you the opportunity to meet with Father Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., Vicar General of the Diocese, or with our Victim Assistance Coordinator, Pat Mudd or our bilingual Victim Assistance Coordinator, Rosa Colello. Our primary purpose and goal in these endeavors is to protect our children and youth and to provide healing to victim-survivors and their families.

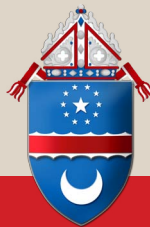
Assuring each of you of my fervent prayer, I remain,

+ Paul S. Loverde

Most. Reverend Paul S. Loverde
Bishop of the Diocese of Arlington

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Protecting Our Youth: Proactive Education & Training

By Deacon Marques Silva, Director, Office of Child Protection & Safety

In 1991, the Diocese of Arlington began the implementation of a structured and proactive program for the prevention of child sexual abuse. Today, Bishop Paul S. Loverde continues to improve diocesan programs and policies that safeguard our children in every youth activity throughout the diocese. *The Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct* is our diocese's comprehensive and systematic program designed to protect children. This policy guides our programs and is in full accord with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

Over the last year, the Office of Child Protection and Safety (OCPS) continued its commitment to assist every diocesan location in providing a safe environment for youth and adults through education and training. In addition, background checks were conducted for all employees and volunteers that have substantial contact with children.

In an effort to update these services, OCPS chose to:

- Update the parish and school internal audit instrument
- Review and provide editorial comments to Virtus to assist in facilitating an improved adult safe environment training program
- Review a new high school safe environment training program
- Develop a social media awareness training presentation for parents
- Train eight additional facilitators for the Virtus: *Called to Protect* training seminars

As a result of these activities, OCPS:

- Conducted 10 parish and school internal programmatic audits
- Planned a revised Virtus "train-the-trainer" to educate all facilitators
- Recommended an additional high school safe environment training program to Bishop Loverde
- Provided two social media awareness training presentations
- Tripled the number of Spanish-speaking Virtus facilitators from three to nine

The faithful assistance of the thousands of diocesan volunteers and employees who work with young people continues to be the strongest asset in the protection of our children.

Please join us in our mission to provide a safe environment to all children entrusted to our care and to assist each child to grow in grace and wisdom. To learn more, visit arlingtondiocese.org/childprotection.

Did You Know...

From July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, more than 4,000 adult employees and volunteers received *Protecting God's Children* training.

More than 46,000 employees and volunteers have received *Protecting God's Children* training since its introduction in 2004.



Returning to the Faith of Childhood

By Patricia Mudd, Coordinator, Victim Assistance

Who We Are

The Office of Victim Assistance seeks to make hope and healing available to all who have been victimized by abuse and violence, helping each person move from victim to survivor to one who thrives with grace.

In 2002, the U.S. Bishops adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, pledging to address the issue of sexual abuse by clergy, lay employees and volunteers in the Catholic Church and agreeing to reach out to victims and their families. In 2004, Bishop Paul S. Loverde and Father Mark Mealy, O.S.F.S., surprised me with an invitation to transition from my work at Catholic Charities to the role of Victim Assistance Coordinator. I was apprehensive. How could I help victims of abuse, some by those with authority in the Church – a Church that I love?

I quickly learned from victims what they needed. Above all, they needed to make peace with what they endured. Quite frequently, even victims of abuse by clergy wanted to find some way to reconnect as adults with the faith of their childhood. Their faces lit up as they shared beautiful memories of Christmas, Easter, First Communion, Confirmation, Sunday Mass, the rosary and other devotions they loved as children. So, our program had to be more than a process for reporting abuse and for helping people find professional counseling. We had to find ways to help people who felt rejected and abandoned by the Church to return to the Catholic community.

Our office is busy doing that – one person at a time. This past year, we received 44 calls from victims and survivors of abuse. One call concerned an inappropriate relationship between a priest and a teen and was reported to Child Protective Services. Another caller reported the abuse of an adult woman by a deacon. Both allegations were evaluated by proper authorities and determined to be unfounded. A fellow victim assistance coordinator called from another diocese seeking services for a victim of sexual abuse in her care who now lives in our diocese. One person called about alleged clergy abuse in another diocese but would give no names or details. There were 16 calls regarding alleged incest and 19 people described having been victimized in other contexts. Other reports involved inappropriate language with a child, requests for a legal referral, a bereavement group, an attorney and two calls about emotional abuse. One caller sought help with spiritual guidance. Some people reported more than one type of abuse.

When We Review

The Arlington Diocesan Review Board advises Bishop Loverde in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. The Review Board is comprised of Catholics, lay and religious, who regularly review diocesan policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. Also, the board reviews these matters both retrospectively and prospectively and gives advice on all aspects of responses in connection with these cases.

Please join us as we pray daily for our victims, survivors and their family members that they may be restored, in Christ, to the faith of their childhood.

What We Offer

With the assistance of the powerful testimonies of those who have survived childhood abuse by priests, employees of the Church or other adults, we welcome all to come and integrate their faith into the process of healing.

Professional Counseling

We have established a list of therapists from the various geographical areas within the diocese. All have an expertise in the field of abuse. Most of these therapists are Catholic, but some are not, which gives the victims flexibility to choose someone with whom they would be comfortable speaking.

Spiritual Guidance

With the help of Father Mealey, the diocese has developed a list of priests and sisters trained in psychological and spiritual issues who are available to provide spiritual guidance for victims. *Veronica's Veil: Spiritual Companion For Survivors of Abuse – A Guide to Integrating Faith with Recovery* is a workbook which draws on this training and is now published for use by other dioceses and groups.

Healing Masses

Led by Bishop Loverde, Masses for healing are offered three times each year and are open to the public. After Mass, we offer information and solace to survivors or loved ones seeking to support the faith journey that follows abuse.

Prayer Services

Victims have told us that it is sometimes difficult to attend Mass, so Father Mealey began to offer prayer services around the diocese. At these, victims have offered their testimony, sharing how their relationships with God and with their Catholic faith have been central to healing. Prayer services are offered three times each year and are open to the public.

Support Groups

Our support groups are gatherings where long-time survivors help newcomers in ways no one else can. They are where friendships and wisdom are shared. The gatherings include dinner and time for participants to discuss topics of their choosing and are held three times each year. What emerges every time are stories of resilience and unwavering love for the faith of their childhoods – no matter how difficult that childhood may have been. Bishop Loverde and Father Mealey attend, listen and at the end, share their thoughts and prayers.

Annual Retreat

Each year, the diocese offers a daylong retreat. Our retreat leaders are drawn from those trained to be spiritual guides, leading attendees to inspire each other with stories of faith that endured despite the suffering in childhood or teen years. Everyone, including those of us ministering here, is uplifted by the rich graces in these events.

Upcoming Events

Bilingual Mass to pray for the healing of victims and survivors of sexual abuse
Tuesday, June 16, 2015, 7:30 p.m., Blessed Sacrament, 1427 West Braddock Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22302

Support Group Evening with Bishop Loverde
Monday, May 18, 2015, 5:45 p.m., Dominican Retreat House, 7103 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, Virginia 22101



Annual Report for Child Protection and Victim Assistance 2013-2014

A Survivor's Story

Written by a program participant in the Diocese of Arlington

We wish for children a safe, happy childhood. Sadly, mine was not.

While my family was stationed overseas, sexual encounters with a maid that my family employed started at the tender age of four and persisted until I was 12. The resulting emotional and spiritual turmoil was considerable.

My stuttering started in preschool. From first grade onward I was an academic basket case. Most of my teachers chose to leave me alone, if I just sat in the back of the room without causing trouble. One teacher, however, resented having me in class so much that she often publicly berated me. And, at home, failing test scores were usually followed with a beating. When we were stationed stateside, my parents enrolled me in the local Catholic grade school, despite the protest of the parish pastor. The good Mother Superior went to bat for us, taking personal responsibility for me. Despite her best efforts, I was never able to spell or memorize prayers! During a class trip to the church for confession, the pastor lost his temper with me in the confessional because he couldn't understand what I was saying. It was very many years before I felt it was safe to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

One Lent, at the age of eight, I had an epiphany during the Stations of the Cross. I realized that my life and experiences were connected with the Way of the Cross. I looked to my Guardian Angel for protection and was inspired to pray for my persecutors, as Jesus had done.

Then, I began not only to discover, but find kinship, with the saints. The first of these was Saint Augustine. At 13 years old, I checked out his biography *The Confessions* from the public library several times. It was heavy reading, but I could see a window opening for me. Next, I came across *The Dark Night of the Soul* by Saint John of the Cross, which began to shed light on a life of prayer that had been puzzling me. Finally, on a visit to Lourdes with my family at age 17, I was introduced to Saint Bernadette. She was sickly, poor, and had difficulty learning. My favorite quote by her is: "Our Lady appeared to me because I was so stupid. If she could have found someone more stupid than I, she would have appeared to that one." Now here was a saint to whom I could relate!

When I met and later married my wife, I told her about all the skeletons in my closet. We were fairly confident that they were buried deep in the past. The truth is, that they came back to haunt me when we started having children. Flashbacks plagued me whenever I was expected to sit in a classroom again. I attended early Mass alone. Holidays and group settings were painful for me, so I tended to avoid them. So we limped through life with my social anxieties keeping me from being fully involved in the everyday life of my family.

Then the clerical sexual abuse scandal rocked the Church. Our parish pastor was relieved of his duties for misconduct. For that reason Bishop Loverde hastened to visit and celebrate a Mass for the victims of sexual abuse. Instead of hiding, as my instinct dictated, I rejoiced, because I realized that this was exactly what I needed. I went to that Mass, shook hands with Bishop Loverde, met Pat Mudd, Victim Assistance Coordinator, and learned about the new support group that was being formed for survivors.

Over the last six years, with the help of my wife, our friends in the survivors' group, and through attending the annual retreats that are custom-tailored just for us, I have been coming out of my shell and learning to live life to the full, the way it's meant to be lived. I have been involved with our parish RCIA program ever since. The people at church, who once thought that my wife was a widow, because of my chosen solitude, now know better. God is good all the time!

The Testimony of a Survivor's Wife

Written by a program participant's wife in the Diocese of Arlington

When my husband and I met in college and as our relationship was turning serious, he shared with me that he underwent sexual abuse by "Fatima," a woman that his Navy family had in their employ during two of their tours abroad. He also explained how a difficulty with learning in school and a severe case of stuttering made him an outcast while growing up. It made him as an easy target for more than one sexual predator. Since life as a Navy dependent entailed moving every few years, he never received the proper attention he needed at home, in school, nor, I'm sad to say, in the Church. While the Church wasn't where his sexual abuse occurred, neither was it where he could find a safe haven back in the 1950s and 1960s. Later, he confided to me that being in church, or even passing by one, made him break out in a cold sweat, after having been scolded out of a confessional in grade school for not speaking clearly! All of these revelations made me feel very sad. However, I was amazed that, despite it all, he was an incredibly kind and deeply spiritual person, whom I found easy to love.

What I didn't fully realize was how seriously his traumatic past would impact our family life. Whenever there was a Back-to-School Night, or a parents' meeting for one of our seven children's sacramental preparation, I always had to go alone. Celebrations of any kind were challenging, but Christmastime was the worst of all. Dad would go hide while the kids and I attempted to make merry. Finally, seven years ago at Christmas Eve Mass, I prayed in desperation, "Fix my husband, Lord! Please restore his joy!"

Within the year, my prayer was answered in a most amazing way! It was announced in the church bulletin that Bishop Loverde was coming to our parish to celebrate a Mass for the victims of sexual abuse. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that my husband was beside himself in anticipation. That Mass with Bishop Loverde was the turning point in our married life! My husband's emotional self-exile from the Church ended that night. Before long we were attending the survivors' group meetings and dinners with the Bishop and his team of dedicated persons. The amount of time and effort Bishop Loverde has devoted to this group has been awe-inspiring! I've witnessed many wounded souls finally getting the tender love and care that God longs for His children to receive in the Church. The healings I've witness have been miraculous!

Not long ago when I heard Pope Francis exhorting the bishops to "be the kind of shepherds that are so close to their sheep that they smell like them," I exclaimed that our bishop was already like that! He dines with us, weeps with us, prays with us, and is always giving us tokens of his affection. And when the Pope argues that the Church he envisions should be more a field hospital than anything else, I smile and say that the Catholic Church in Arlington already is!