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PROTECTING INNOCENTS

The victimization of children is a very real and present danger in our culture. Most shocking in the revelations of child abuse is that the predator is often one trusted by the family and community: a teacher, coach or even a priest.

The Diocese of Arlington is committed to maintaining environments within our parishes and schools where children can be safe to grow in grace and wisdom.

Through policies established by Arlington Bishop John R. Keating in 1991 and strengthened by Bishop Paul S. Loverde since his arrival to Arlington in 1999, it is hoped that child sexual abuse can be prevented in every youth activity within the Diocese. *The Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct* is a comprehensive and systematic program designed to protect children. The programs that are in place throughout the Diocese are fully in accord with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The child protection policies and programs of the Diocese were established to protect children by following five principles:

1. Know the Warning Signs

While child predators can come from any socioeconomic class or educational level, they have one thing in common: a specific group of behaviors known as "grooming." Grooming behaviors are those that attempt to form a bond of dependence between the perpetrator and the victim. The purpose of these behaviors is

to make the child hesitant to reveal the abuse.

"Physical grooming" consists of behaviors that desensitize the child to the touch of the perpetrator and confuse the child about boundary violations. "Physical grooming" often includes tickling and wrestling.

"Emotional grooming" includes behaviors that seek to make the child dependent on the abuser. "Emotional grooming" might include gift giving or allowing the child to participate in activities that parents would not allow, such as the sharing of alcohol or drugs or exposure to pornography.

"Community grooming" consists of behaviors that seek to gain trust from the community. The perpetrator seeks to become trusted by the community and depended upon to assist in children's activities, which allows the perpetrator greater access to children. If the abuse should later come to light, "community grooming" leads to denial as members of the community come to the defense of the abuser.

To recognize these grooming behaviors and to take immediate and prudent actions when they are recognized requires that all persons who work with children be trained to recognize the dynamics of grooming behaviors. All employees of the Diocese, parishes and schools, and all volunteers who work with children, receive child safety training through the "Protecting God's Children" program. This four-hour training seminar is considered one of the most effective training programs in the country and is used in more than 90 dioceses. It also includes continuing training for professionals and annual refresher training for all volunteers who work with children.

In the current reporting period, over 3,500 adult employees and volunteers received "Protecting God's Children" training. Over 30,000 employees and volunteers have received "Protecting God's Children" training in the Diocese since its introduction, and now serve as watchful sentinels ensuring that children's interactions with adults are appropriate and safe.

2. Control Access

No one has a "right" to volunteer to work with children. In fact, there are some people who must be kept away from children. To maintain the safety of children, each and every person who interacts with them must be thoroughly vetted and approved. Every employee and all volunteers working with children must complete criminal background checks. These checks include state and national criminal record searches and a search of the Central Registry of the Virginia Department of Social Services.

In the current reporting period, more than 3,000 employees and volunteers underwent background checks; more than 30,000 diocesan

employees and volunteers of the Diocese have completed these checks since August 2004. A formal application process for anyone working with children is vital. As a part of this formal application process, references are checked to ensure that past behaviors are not overlooked. A formal interview is also required so that the Church's commitment to the safety of children can be clearly expressed and the programs in place to protect children can be explained.

3. Monitor Programs

All programs sponsored by the Church must be reviewed and approved by principals and pastors. This review process ensures that those adults involved have completed all training and background checks and are approved to interact with children. This process also helps ensure that sufficient adult supervision is being used to safeguard children.

Monitoring also involves the direct supervisor interacting with all programs. This includes visiting classes, observing programs to ensure that all policies are being followed and securing or monitoring areas where children could be isolated.

4. Be Aware

Studies have indicated that more than 90 percent of children who have been sexually abused do not reveal that abuse has occurred. Recovery from sexual abuse is largely influenced by the type of abuse and the length of time over which the abuse occurred. It is acutely important that young people advise their parent or another safe adult as soon as they become uncomfortable or frightened.

Being aware of what is going on in young people's lives, while primarily the role of parents, is also a role shared by other trusted adults. Preventing abuse is the role of adults, and programs geared toward children that might shift the burden of responsibility to children should be avoided.

However, programs that encourage children to confide in parents and other trusted adults can be effective in revealing abuse or potentially abusive situations, and can limit contact with predators.

Research indicates that children who had been abused and had been previously trained in safety programs reported their abuse at four times the rate of children who had not received training.

The Diocese of Arlington provides such training in "Formation in Christian Chastity," which is a part of all religious education programs and Catholic schools' curricula. Since the program began in 2005, over 65,000 children have received training.

ANNUAL CHILD PROTECTION REPORT

Teenagers face special challenges coming to understand appropriate intimacy and the dangers of manipulation masquerading as special friendship. To help explain these challenges, the Diocese provides a separate program for teenagers entitled "You Matter." Both of these training programs can be reviewed at www.arlingtondiocese.org.

5. Communicate Concerns

Once inappropriate behaviors have been noted in the actions of some adults, this issue must be directly addressed. Employees and volunteers are trained to address their concerns to the individuals involved in interactions with children that seem to be inappropriate. They are guided in these discussions by the "Code of Conduct," which must be received and signed by all persons within the Diocese who interact with children.

These are clear guidelines of what are considered appropriate and inappropriate behaviors when interacting with children. They are also trained to address these behaviors with supervisors if such behaviors continue. If child abuse is suspected, employees and all volunteers will report such suspicions to Child Protective Services for the appropriate city or county.

All personnel of the Diocese are mandatory reporters under diocesan policy and have an obligation to report suspicions of child abuse. Once suspicions are reported to civil authorities, personnel also report to Church officials to ensure immediate actions are taken to maintain the safety of the children under our care.

These five principles — knowing the warning signs, controlling access, monitoring programs, being aware and communicating our concerns — constitute a comprehensive approach to keeping children safe from any person who might seek to harm them.

Maintaining these programs and improving them is the goal of the Office of Child Protection and Safety for the Diocese of Arlington. With the help of the thousands of volunteers and employees of the Diocese who work with young people, we can prevent this danger in the lives of our children.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON'S CHILD PROTECTION ADVISORY BOARD

This is the seventh annual report.

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington's Child Protection Advisory Board was formed at the direction of Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde in late summer of 2003 as a unique effort to assist in organizing a proper approach to the protection of children in the diocese. Specifically, our board continues to serve in an

advisory role to Bishop Loverde and his staff in the formulation of child sexual abuse prevention policies and procedures.

This diocesan effort is directed pursuant to the *Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse* established in 1991; it is also in conformity with the word and spirit of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, which were approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) at the November 2002 general meeting.

The Diocese of Arlington provides comprehensive assistance to anyone who, as a minor, was sexually abused by a priest, deacon, teacher, employee or representative of the diocese. Parents, guardians, children and survivors of sexual abuse are invited and encouraged to contact the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator (703-841-2530), an experienced social worker, who will provide confidential consultation.

The Diocese of Arlington is committed to assisting victims/survivors throughout the healing process. For further information, visit www.arlingtondiocese.org.

The formation of the Advisory Board is not required by the *Charter*. It is a unique effort by Bishop Loverde to bring the voice, vision and experience of qualified, independent, professional members of the Catholic community to support the development of proper background checks and awareness training programs designed to protect children from abuse, sexual exploitation and neglect. Board members are appointed for five-year terms and may be re-appointed. For more information on the Review and Advisory Boards, please see the *Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Child Protection Pages* of the diocesan website, www.arlingtondiocese.org.

There were no board members added to the Diocesan Advisory Board this year. However, Advisory Board member Jim McGuire passed on to eternal life and Dr. Richard Perry stepped down from active service to the board. Both of these fine gentlemen and Catholic role models were instrumental in the formation, vision and efforts of the Advisory Board over the past seven years. Dr. Perry also served on the Diocesan Review Board. The Advisory Board met three times throughout this year to discuss issues and questions brought forth by Bishop Loverde and his staff, to receive status reports on formal/informal audits and training programs and to review reports from the Office of Victim Assistance. Several Board members routinely participated in activities sponsored and coordinated by the diocese in support of the *Charter*.

The Advisory Board was again very satisfied with the efforts of Rev. Terry Specht, Director of the

Diocesan Child Protection and Safety Program, and Patricia Mudd, A.C.S.W., Victim Assistance Coordinator. This year, as in the past, Bishop Loverde and Rev. Mealey continued to conduct Masses and prayer services throughout the diocese for healing of victims/survivors. Bishop Loverde is to be particularly praised for his continued distinguishable efforts reaching out to victims/ survivors.

The Advisory Board was honored to have Sister Bernadette McManigal, B.V.M., Superintendent of Schools, attend one of our board meetings this year as part of an outreach effort to collaborate with organizations possessing shared values, mutual concerns and mandated (and non-mandated) efforts. Sister Bernadette shared best practices regarding child safety and the promotion of moral values in the diocesan school system. All present at the meeting agreed to reach out to each other if questions or concerns arise within our collective areas of expertise. We look forward to working with Sister Bernadette and her team on issues of mutual concern and sharing effective practices, procedures and programs to protect our children.

The annual joint meeting of the Advisory Board and the Diocesan Review Board was sponsored by Bishop Loverde at the St. Thomas More Center, Arlington. The guest speaker was Rev. Lewis Fiorelli, O.S.F.S. He gave an enlightening talk on the provision of spiritual assistance for victims/survivors of sexual abuse. The Board prays that the continuation of Masses and prayer services for healing of victims/survivors of sexual abuse, as well as the success of support groups for victims/survivors of sexual abuse at Dominican Retreat, provide enduring comfort and facilitates healing. The Advisory Board is very encouraged by the continued open and supportive outreach by the diocese to victims/survivors of sexual abuse and will continue to observe and advise the diocese's victim assistance efforts.

The Advisory Board has consistently promoted the key elements of the *Charter*, which continues implementing a useful background check program to screen employees and volunteers working close to children, training to increase awareness and adherence to a published Code of Conduct to clearly distinguish inappropriate behavior. However, vigilant efforts by all parishioners and volunteers, in partnership with diocesan and parish leadership, are the best protection for our children.

Very respectfully submitted,

*James M. Byrne, Esq., Chairman
Mila R. Tecala, L.C.S.W., Vice Chairperson
Teresa Hartnett, Secretary
Patricia Dalton, Ph.D.
John Dillon, M.D.
Fr. Alexander Drummond
Sister Susan Louise Eder, O.S.F.S.*

ANNUAL CHILD PROTECTION REPORT

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR'S REPORT TO THE DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

February 28, 2011

(Report covers the Audit Period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010)

In 2002, the bishops of the United States passed *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which calls for dioceses to "reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to victims is for healing and reconciliation." According to the Charter, the Diocese must provide outreach to those who have been victims of sexual abuse by anyone in Church service. The Charter specifies that this outreach will include counseling, spiritual assistance and support groups.

The Diocese of Arlington offers a number of resources to victims/survivors of sexual abuse. Bishop Paul S. Loverde has encouraged the

Victim Assistance Coordinator to provide assistance to victims/survivor of abuse by clergy as well as by family members, acquaintances, violence on the streets and inappropriate adult relationships. This ministry in the Diocese of Arlington goes beyond the requirements set out by the Charter to assist those who have been abused by clergy. In the Diocese of Arlington, the program is not only responsive to victims of abuse by clergy, but also to any victim of sexual abuse, whether the perpetrator of the abuse is a Church employee, a family member or another in society. Bishop Loverde's generosity has allowed over 301 individuals to receive help from the Office of Victim Assistance in the Diocese of Arlington since 2003.

During the audit period from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010, the Victim Assistance Coordinators received 54 new calls to report instances of sexual abuse and to request referrals for therapy or spiritual assistance. The Diocese received calls from or about seven victims/survivors with allegations of childhood sexual abuse or inappropriate conduct by clergy, including religious order priests. The remaining 47 new calls were from or about victims/survivors of sexual abuse that was not related to the Church. They called to inquire about the resources we offer, including referrals for therapy and spiritual direction and information about our Masses, Prayer Services or Support Group meetings at Dominican Retreat. In addition to these new calls, 49 victims/survivors who had requested assistance in previous audit years continue to receive assistance and participate in the various programs and services offered by the Diocese of Arlington.

Of the seven calls involving alleged abuse by clergy, one involved an adult individual who alleged that he had been abused by a priest of the Diocese of Arlington, but initially stated that he was not able to recall any information about the alleged abuse. Subsequent to the end of the 2009-10 audit period, this individual provided additional information about the allegation. The allegation was reported to law enforcement officials pursuant to our diocesan policy, and is under investigation to determine whether it is supported by credible evidence. A second allegation was against a deceased priest of another diocese which has been reported to the diocese where the priest was incardinated. A third person came forward and told us of her abuse by a deceased priest but would not give the name of the diocese or the priest. There was a fourth allegation in which a victim's brother told us that his brother had been abused by a priest but the victim would not give us any information regarding the abuser or the diocese where the abuse allegedly occurred. There were two reports of allegations of abuse by priests in other countries. The first was reported to the diocese in which the priest is incardinated. With regard to the second allegation, the victim did not provide sufficient information for a report

to be made. There was a seventh allegation by a person who gave conflicting accounts of who abused her, but stated that the abuser was deceased. She also contacted law enforcement authorities, who conferred with the Victim Assistance Coordinator regarding the allegation.

The Diocese of Arlington offers several services throughout each year to pray for and support victims/survivors of sexual abuse. From June 2004 to June 2010, a total of 29 Masses have been celebrated in our diocese to Pray for Healing for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse. We estimate that over 2,060 people have been in attendance. Bishop Loverde has celebrated Masses to pray for healing for victims/survivors of sexual abuse during this past audit year at Sacred Heart, Manassas; St. Rita, Alexandria; and St. Theresa, Ashburn.

Bishop Loverde hosted three Support Group Evenings at Dominican Retreat in McLean. These evenings consist of dinner, a discussion for about 1¼ hours and a prayer service. Over these last several years, victims/survivors have related their struggles and efforts to heal to each other, Bishop Loverde, Rev. Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., V.G., Rev. Terry Specht, and the Victim Assistance Coordinator. These meetings have truly been a profound combination of listening, sharing and support through difficult times as well as very educational for diocesan staff. Since their inception in 2005, Bishop Loverde has hosted 16 Support Group Meetings with 274 victims/survivors and a spouse or support person in attendance.

Rev. Mealey continues to celebrate Prayer Services to pray for victims/survivors of sexual abuse. They consist of scripture readings, a homily, prayers of the faithful and victim testimony. We have three victim/survivors who speak publicly about their abuse and efforts to heal. One of the survivors speaks at each of the Prayer Services. These testimonials are very moving and have had a powerful impact on many of the people in attendance. Both the Masses and the Prayer Services are followed by a reception where those in attendance have the opportunity to speak with the clergy and Victim Assistance Coordinator. The Prayer Services this past year were held at St. Philip, Falls Church; St. Andrew, Clifton; and St. Timothy, Chantilly. We have now held a total of 17 Prayer Services since April 2005, and we estimate that over 285 people have attended the Prayer Services.

In the Diocese of Arlington, we have a group of diocesan and religious order priests who are providing spiritual assistance to victims/survivors of sexual abuse. They receive annual training to help understand some of the needs particular to victims/survivors of sexual abuse. This year, Dr. Joseph Corbo presented to them and two of our victims/survivors shared their progress in healing and spiritual growth.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Masses and Prayer Services to Pray for Healing for Victims/ Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

Mass at 7:30 p.m.

Our Lady of the Blue Ridge

Routes 29 and 629

Madison, Virginia 22727

Bishop Paul S. Loverde to preside

For a complete listing of upcoming Masses and Prayer Services, please visit www.arlingtondiocese.org.

Support Group Meetings

This spring, Bishop Loverde is hosting two Support Group Meetings at Dominican Retreat, 7103 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, Virginia, 22101. The first meeting was on Monday, March 28, 2011, and the second meeting is on Monday, May 9, 2011. These groups are open to all survivors of abuse and their spouse or support person. The evening begins at 5:45 and will end by 9 p.m. The evening includes a prayer service, discussion and a light meal.

**Please RSVP four days prior
to the meeting to:**

Patricia Mudd: (703)-841-2530

In 2006, several victims/survivors began meeting with the Victim Assistance Coordinator and Rev. Mealey to help plan and develop programs. This group is known as the Survivors Planning Group and meets two or three times per year. During the last audit period, the group was integral in evaluating our first annual retreat for victims/survivors as well as advocating and planning for a second retreat. The Survivors Planning Group also has made suggestions for additions to our program fostering a sense of ownership by our victims/survivors.

As you may know, there has been an increase in concern regarding bullying and inappropriate behavior in the schools in the United States. In the past, we have assisted Sister Bernadette McManigal, B.V.M., the diocesan Superintendent of Schools, and her staff in the development of character education programs. As part of this effort, Sister Bernadette may refer victims of bullying or child-on-child inappropriate behavior to the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

During this past audit year, the Office of Victim Assistance has offered a number of presentations about our program. Specifically, we participated in the Summer Learning Program for Seminarians, spoke at a Meeting of Principals of Arlington Catholic Schools, and made presentations to therapists at Alpha Omega Clinic and Catholic Charities Family Services and to our diocesan Youth Ministers. Two of our victim/survivors accompany us and share their story of abuse and efforts to heal. We are most grateful to these men and women who have so willingly shared their stories in an effort to help with our outreach.

Bishop Loverde, Rev. Mealey and Rev. Specht have demonstrated a real commitment to our victims/survivors. The Diocese of Arlington is recognized as one of the few dioceses around the country that offer regular Masses, Prayer Services and Support Group meetings with Bishop Loverde for our victims/survivors. The Support Group meetings provide a unique opportunity for listening to our victims/survivors and for them to grow in healing, in relationship with God and one another as well as with our Bishop and his staff.

The Arlington Diocese continues to benefit from the expertise of both our Review and Advisory Boards. These Boards provide invaluable expertise to our program and we are very grateful for the work they do in support of child protection and victim assistance in our diocese. Our victims/survivors are most appreciative of the program provided by the Diocese of Arlington.

Submitted by Patricia Mudd, Victim Assistance Coordinator (703) 841-2530.

VICTIM TESTIMONY

When I began this article describing my journey from victim to survivor of sexual abuse by a priest, I made the mistake of reading other articles written by survivors. I knew this was a bad idea because now I find myself struggling with how to share something as deeply personal as my own journey, knowing others have done it before me so eloquently. I know I'm out of my league, but I also know that just as our experience of abuse varied greatly, so does our journey to healing. So I write this in the hope that it will be helpful for other victims who may be trying to find their way.

I have been participating in the Victims Assistance Program of the Arlington Diocese for five years. My initial contact was with Pat Mudd, the coordinator of the program, who continues to be a great help. She listened when I was ready to talk, she accompanied me to my meeting with Bishop Loverde, she encouraged me to participate in the survivor support group meetings and she occasionally nudges me, ever so gently, to share my story. The few times I have agreed to do this have been opportunities for healing and growth, and I am glad I overcame my initial reluctance. It makes me feel strong, powerful and in control – just the opposite of how I felt as a child victim.

The first step, coming forward and admitting the abuse, was the hardest for me. I had spent years trying to pretend it didn't happen, carefully guarding that secret, and the thought of telling someone was terrifying. I knew once I started down this path, there would be no turning back, and I didn't know where the path would lead me. At the time, I didn't understand that talking about the abuse was the only way for me to begin to recover from it.

Finding the right professional to talk with is critical. Just because a person has training and a license doesn't mean they will be the best fit. For my first attempt at therapy eleven years ago, I spent the better part of a year crying. I thought it was part of the process of healing and didn't realize I was so deeply depressed that just getting through the day was using all the energy I had. It wasn't until I changed doctors and addressed the depression and anxiety, which are common among victims of abuse, that I could begin the process of healing. The doctor I have now is wise and compassionate, and I am grateful to him because his skill and insight have greatly improved the quality of my life.

The survivor support group meetings sponsored by the diocese have been extremely helpful for several reasons. Getting to know others who have suffered abuse and have worked so hard to recover from the devastating effects has been an inspiration to me. When I first started this process and was unable to imagine feeling happy and whole, they gave me hope just by their presence. I am grateful for the Bishop's attendance at these meetings. He expresses his sorrow for what we have experienced and constantly reminds us that the abuse was not our fault. Honestly, you can never hear that too often. I am humbled by other survivors who are working to forgive their abusers. One person said he prays for his abuser every day, asking God to give him forgiveness and peace. Calling to mind my own difficulties with forgiveness is an ongoing reminder to me that I still have work to do. But I'm happy to follow the counsel of St. Francis de Sales who said "have patience with all things, but first of all, with yourself."

As I mentioned earlier, I struggled with depression and anxiety. While the depression made me sad, the anxiety made me ill, and was causing panic attacks. I worried about things that happened in the past, reliving the worst moments, and I worried about things that might happen in the future. My doctor suggested bio-feedback training as a way to understand the consequences of worry and learn relaxation techniques. I haven't the space here to adequately describe the process, but what I learned was life-changing. I was able to see, through the use of receptors measuring my body's response, the negative effect my worrisome thoughts had on my physical well-being. So I started training myself to stop worrying and I won't say that it's easy to do, especially when it's a lifelong habit, but I can tell you that it's possible. And it is definitely worth the effort.

Last, and most important, this is not a journey anyone should take alone. I am blessed to have caring people who have been with me from the beginning: my friend who showed up at the first Mass for victims that I attended, because he thought I shouldn't be alone; another friend and newly commissioned spiritual director who makes time for me that I know he doesn't have; and most of all my husband. There are no words that can adequately express my love and gratitude for everything he has endured with me. I believe that God, knowing all that would happen in my life, decided I would need an exceptionally good husband, and that's what He gave me.

Submitted by a survivor of abuse who wishes to remain anonymous.