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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, 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 over 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 2,000 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, over 2,000 employees and volunteers underwent background checks; over 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 towards 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.

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 titled "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.

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

This is our 6th annual report to Bishop Paul S. Loverde.

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 Catholic Diocese of Arlington. Specifically, our board continues to serve in an advisory role to Bishop Loverde 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 U.S. Conference of Catholic

Bishops (USCCB) at the November 2002 general meeting.

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.

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 Coordinators, experienced social workers 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 function of the Advisory Board is also to examine how the diocese responds to an allegation, to inspect the services offered to victims/survivors as well as to clergy who are accused of sexual abuse and to provide advice to the Bishop. In recent years, the board reviewed the diocesan sexual misconduct policy and assisted the diocese in implementing the "safe environment" programming for children that the *Charter* envisioned. In addition, the Advisory Board promoted healing for victims/survivors and recommended speakers and educational courses for employees and volunteers of the diocese. 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 Web site, www.arlingtondiocese.org.

Board Activities

There were no board members added to the Diocesan Advisory Board this year. The Advisory Board met three times throughout this year to discuss issues and questions brought forth from Bishop Loverde, to receive status reports on formal/informal audits and training programs and to review reports from the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinators. Several Board members routinely participated in activities sponsored and coordinated by the diocese in support of the *Charter*.

The Advisory Board was very pleased to receive reports regarding the well-attended support group meetings held throughout the year at Dominican Retreat with Bishop Paul S. Loverde, Rev. Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., Rev. Terry Specht and Patricia Mudd and Kathryn Kramer, the Victim Assistance Coordinators. These group meetings are held with victims/survivors of clergy childhood sexual abuse, childhood victims of incest and violence in the community,

as well as victims/survivors who were involved in inappropriate or abusive relationships as adults with clergy or employees of the Church. The Advisory Board believes these support groups will contribute to more widely attended and in-depth spiritual assistance to all victims.

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 especially commended for his notable efforts to reach out to victims/survivors.

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 an attorney from the USCCB Office of General Counsel. The Office of the General Counsel acts as the source of legal advice to the USCCB and its committees. It also supports the work of diocesan attorneys, State Catholic Conferences and other national, regional, and local Catholic entities by providing uniform assistance on constitutional and tax law, litigation and other legal matters.

Conclusion

The Advisory Board again applauds the efforts of Patricia Mudd and Kathryn Kramer, diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinators, and Rev. Terry Specht, Director of the diocesan Child Protection and Safety Program.

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, provides 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 monitor 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 vet employees and volunteers working close to children, training to increase awareness and adherence to a published Code of Conduct to clearly distinguish inappropriate behavior. Only vigilant efforts by all parishioners and volunteers in partnership with diocesan and parish leadership will protect our children.

Very respectfully submitted,

*James M. Byrne, Esq., Chairman
Mila R. Tecala, LCSW, Vice Chairperson
Richard Perry, M.D., Secretary
Patricia Dalton, Ph.D.
James McGuire
John Dillon, M.D.
Teresa Hartnett
Rev. Alexander Drummond
Sister Susan Louise Eder, O.S.F.S.*

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS' REPORT TO THE DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington has two Victim Assistance Coordinators, Patricia Mudd, MSW, ACSW, and Kathryn Kramer, MSW, LCSW, who minister to all who have been sexually abused, whether by Church personnel or others. Bishop Paul S. Loverde has encouraged the Victim Assistance Coordinators to provide support to victims/survivors of abuse by family members or acquaintances, of violence on the streets

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Thursday, April 29, 2010
Prayer Service at 7:30 p.m.

St. Timothy
13807 Poplar Tree Road
Chantilly, VA, 20151
Rev. Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., Presider
Victim Testimony

Tuesday, June 8, 2010
Mass at 7:30 p.m.

St. Theresa
21371 St. Theresa Lane
Ashburn, VA, 20146
Bishop Paul S. Loverde, Celebrant

Support Group Meetings for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse

This spring, Bishop Loverde is hosting two Support Group Meetings at Dominican Retreat, 7103 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, VA, 22101:

Tuesday, April 13, 2010

Monday, May 10, 2010

These groups are open to all survivors of abuse and their spouse or support person. The evening begins at 5:45 p.m. and will end by 9:00 p.m. A light meal will be served along with discussion and a prayer service.

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

Victim Assistance Coordinators
Kathryn Kramer: 703-841-2759 or
Patricia Mudd: 703-841-2530

and of inappropriate adult relationships. This ministry goes beyond the requirements set out by the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* to assist those who have been abused by clergy. Bishop Loverde's generosity has allowed a significant number of individuals to receive aid from the Office of Victim Assistance and to participate in the programs offered by the Diocese of Arlington.

Through their work, the Diocese of Arlington adheres to the *Charter*, 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 the victim of sexual abuse by anyone in church service. The *Charter* specifies that this outreach will include counseling, spiritual assistance, and support groups.

By the end of the last audit period, June 30, 2009, 246 victims/survivors of sexual abuse had called the Diocese of Arlington for assistance since the start of the program in 2003. Between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009, the Victim Assistance Coordinators received 52 calls to report instances of sexual abuse and to request assistance. Of these 52 calls, the Diocese received two calls from third parties about two victims/survivors who were said to have allegations of childhood sexual abuse by clergy of the Diocese of Arlington. In both of these situations, the alleged victims, after encouragement from the third parties, refused to come forward to make a report or to cooperate with an investigation. As such, there is no way to determine if the third parties' statements are credible. The Review Board has not been formally notified of these referrals since there is not enough information available to conduct an investigation. Another two calls were reports of inappropriate conduct by a clergy member towards minors in the Diocese of Arlington. These allegations did not rise to the definition of child abuse but did allege conduct towards a minor that was otherwise inappropriate. There were two reports of inappropriate conduct by a clergy member towards adults in the Diocese of Arlington. These four reports were forwarded to the Bishop's Delegate for Clergy for investigation, and appropriate action has been taken.

Of the remaining calls received during the audit period, there were four allegations of childhood abuse or inappropriate behavior by priests or religious from other dioceses or religious orders. The Victim Assistance Coordinator assists the victims/survivors in reporting allegations of abuse to the religious order or to the diocese in question, which in turn notifies the appropriate civil authorities. The additional 42 calls during

this audit period were from or about victims/survivors of non-Church related sexual abuse. 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, McLean. An additional 40 victims/survivors who requested assistance prior to the beginning of this audit year continue to receive assistance and participate in the various services offered by the Diocese of Arlington.

As mentioned above, outreach to victims includes spiritual healing as well. Reverend Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., Vicar General, celebrated 3 prayer services for healing for victims/survivors during this audit period. The prayer services were held at Our Lady of Lourdes, Arlington; St. Jude, Fredericksburg; and St. Louis, Alexandria. We have now held a total of 14 prayer services since April 2005, with an estimated 250 attending. The prayer services consist of readings, a homily, a talk by one of the Victim Assistance Coordinators and a testimonial by one of our victims/survivors. We currently have 3 victims/survivors of sexual abuse who have volunteered to share their struggles and efforts to heal at the prayer services. These testimonials are very powerful and have had an impact on many of the people in attendance.

During this audit period, Bishop Loverde celebrated 3 Masses for victims/survivors at the following parishes: St. Mary, Alexandria; St. Mark, Vienna; and St. Francis of Assisi, Triangle. A total of 26 Masses to pray for healing for victims/survivors of sexual abuse, with an approximate total attendance of 2,000 people, have been celebrated in our diocese from June 2004 to June 2009. Both the Masses and the prayer services are followed by receptions at which those in attendance have the opportunity to speak with Bishop Loverde, Rev. Mealey, Rev. Specht and the Victim Assistance Coordinators.

Since December 2005, Bishop Loverde has invited victims/survivors and a support person to support group meetings at Dominican Retreat. We had four such meetings during this audit period, and over 200 people have attended since the groups began. The evenings consist of dinner, a discussion, and a prayer service. Over these last several years, victims/survivors have related their struggles and their efforts to heal with each other, with Bishop Loverde and with the Victim Assistance Coordinators. These meetings have been a profound testament of sharing and support, even through difficult times.

The Office of Victim Assistance also refers outside resources to those who are in need. The Office maintains a list of therapists around the Diocese who have special training in working with people who have been abused. We also have a group of diocesan and

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religious order priests who provide spiritual assistance to victims/survivors of sexual abuse. They receive annual training to help understand the needs particular to victims/survivors of sexual abuse and trauma. We invite victims/survivors to meet with these priests for spiritual assistance.

Since 2006, several victims/survivors have been meeting with the Victim Assistance Coordinators and with Rev. Mealey to help develop programs. This group, which meets 2-3 times per year, is currently known as the "Survivors Planning Group." During the last audit period, the group was integral in advocating and planning the first retreat for victims/survivors of sexual abuse in the Diocese of Arlington. The retreat was held in September 2009 at St. Ann, Arlington. The group also met to discuss plans for a conference for diocesan employees; the conference is not yet scheduled. The "Survivors Planning Group" also developed and drafted a brochure that details the services offered by the Office of Victim Assistance, which is now available at local parishes and diocesan offices.

The Diocese of Arlington is recognized as one of the few dioceses around the country that offers regular prayer services and Masses to pray for healing for victims/survivors of sexual abuse. We are pleased to share that some of our victims/survivors have reported substantial progress in their healing through the combination of therapy and spiritual assistance they have utilized. Personally, we would like to thank Bishop Loverde, Rev. Mealey and Rev. Specht for their concern and support to our victims/survivors of sexual abuse. Their commitment is unparalleled. We also want to thank our Diocesan Review and Advisory Boards for the work they do on behalf of our victims/survivors.

Our schedule of Masses, prayer services and support group meetings with Bishop Loverde is included in this report and available at www.arlingtondiocese.org. We invite our victims/survivors and members of the Diocesan community to join us at these services and to call us with any questions they may have. Please keep victims/survivors of sexual abuse in your prayers.

*Submitted by Victim Assistance Coordinators
Patricia Mudd: 703-841-2530
Kathryn Kramer: 703-841-2759*

VICTIM TESTIMONY

2010 marks my fifth anniversary in the Victim Assistance Program of the Diocese of Arlington. I approached Pat Mudd twenty-five years after being sexually and emotionally abused by priests as a child and teen. I had long ago left the devout Catholic home where I was raised in a distant diocese, but a wound still hobbled the successful life I was living here.

Attending Sunday Mass forced me to revisit terrible memories. Receiving other sacraments and simple social comfort in a Catholic community were impossible. Sometimes I braved distressing flashbacks while enduring Sunday Mass just so I could partake in communion, but inevitably I paid the price of tremendous anxiety for the rest of the day – or week.

Like many survivors, I did not forsake faith. I relied on the rosary, which my parents had habitually prayed with their children. For several years, I fasted each week in petition to Our Lady. Certain novenas, which my mother had prayed, I recited faithfully. In Adoration, I relied on the emptiness as security; no predator could approach without notice. While these precious devotions are part of the vast wealth of our faith, I was still estranged from the sacraments.

"My plans for you are peace and not disaster. When you call to me, I will answer you. I will bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you."

Jeremiah 29:10-13

For one long period, my idea of going to Sunday Mass involved parking near a church while Mass was underway inside, imagining sorrowfully the ritual by reading from a missal I kept in my glove compartment. I faithfully attended daily Mass, hoping it and "parking lot" attendance could somehow be calculated into a second-class holiness. In truth, nothing could have made me feel worthy of Mass attendance: I was sure I was at fault for all that had transpired in my childhood.

The wounds of abuse by a priest are distinct. Adults rely on faith, sacraments and our Catholic communities to navigate the sometimes daunting challenges of life. However, for adults who were abused as children by priests or other Church authorities access to these crucial things is compromised by terrible associations.

Therapy was not enough for me to heal from evil, yet the sacraments and community I needed were not available. Dark nights of soul characterized my struggle. My parents and Catholic school teachers had shown me that faith and sacraments and community are wellsprings of grace. Though they were all deceased, their faith carried me forward. No words could express the loneliness of the exile. My spirit was groaning. At the nexus of such impossibility, however, we are promised Christ will give us the strength to do all things.

Five years ago, my personal torment forced me to overcome the cynicism with which I viewed the Victim Assistance Program. I arrived doubtful at a prayer service offered for survivors of abuse. I was about to discover what too many still do not know. Our diocese has, among United States dioceses, an unrivaled pastorally skilled outreach to people who have suffered abuse or trauma.

Bishop Loverde offers trained social workers and priests. They listen to our stories. Eventually, a survivor hears a priest assure him or her that "it was not your fault." This is the opposite of what pedophile priests told me. The decades between my encounter with these holy Catholics and my escape from the pedophiles turned out to be a passing exile, from which I have returned.

Sunday Mass can still be an emotional Everest, as lately when media coverage of the pedophile pediatrician in Maryland triggers chilling memories. Like all human suffering, these wounds are unique. They are part of a cross only I can bear. It is shared by no one and very easily proved to be isolating when I was estranged from God's community – until someone offered charity.

Too often I have overhead Catholics criticize survivors of abuse by priests as refusing to "get over it," as if we cling to an isolating distinction too long. Yet, like all people who suffer, we are, after taking all the right steps, still helpless to bestow healing on ourselves. We all need to be saved.

The Victim Assistance Program proves we are saved in relationship – with Christ and with those who serve Him. Jesus healed each person differently, reflecting their individual pain and identity. This diocesan program ended my estrangement from the Church community through a healing relationship with other survivors, with compassionate priests and remarkable lay Catholics willing to respect my struggle with trauma, with a bishop who assured me that it was not my fault. The doors of the Catholic Church reopened. Mass and sacraments took their proper role in the healing journey which forges identity in every Catholic – including me.

From my parking-lot pew I once sat baffled as people with children in tow teemed thoughtlessly through the church entrance to sit heedless side by side and receive Eucharist as routine. Now, it's different. As thousands of Catholics fill pews with wondrous complacency, I watch from my favorite spot in a parish where I attend (almost) comfortably, and I praise God for the blessings that permit all this to be.

Submitted by a survivor of abuse who wishes to remain anonymous