

# THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON ANNUAL REPORT

FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND VICTIM ASSISTANCE

JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2015

## A LETTER FROM THE MOST REVEREND PAUL S. LOVERDE BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON



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 for victims and survivors know the depth of my sorrow at what has transpired in our Church. To those who are victims and 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 or 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.

I also reiterate the words spoken recently by Pope Francis, during his visit with victims and survivors last fall in Philadelphia, “Words cannot express my sorrow for the abuse you suffered. You are precious children of God who should always expect our protection, our care and our love.”

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 or volunteers of the Church, to call Pat; she and her colleagues, Mrs. Rosa Colello, M.A., and Mrs. Aneliz Sipe, LPC, are ready to assist you.

This Child Protection and Victim Assistance Annual Report is 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 those wounded by sexual abuse. The Office of Child Protection, under the direction of Deacon Marques Silva, focuses not only on protecting children, but also 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 for July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015.

To 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 Thomas Ferguson, Vicar General of the Diocese, or with our Victim Assistance Coordinator, Pat Mudd, or our bilingual Victim Assistance Coordinators, Rosa Colello and Aneliz Sipe. Our primary purpose and goal in these endeavors is to protect our children and youth and to provide healing to victims and survivors and their families.

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

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

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# A LETTER FROM PATRICIA MUDD VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH TO THE HEALING PROCESS

### WHO WE ARE

Since 2003, the diocesan Office of Victim Assistance has sought to help victims and survivors heal from the suffering and pain of sexual abuse and violence.

In 2002, the U.S. Bishops adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, that included a plan to safeguard our children and launch a new program to help victims and survivors. In 2004, Bishop Paul S. Loverde and Father Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., asked me to begin the work of Victim Assistance Coordinator. On June 30, 2004, the first Mass to pray for healing of victims and survivors of sexual abuse was celebrated by Bishop Loverde at the Cathedral of Saint Thomas More, in Arlington.

At this Mass, Bishop Loverde's homily began with a sincere apology to victims and survivors for the pain they have suffered due to sexual abuse. He promised his prayers for healing and made a commitment to support them on their journey. True to his word, Bishop Loverde and Father Mealey, then Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, developed a strong program of support and prayers for victims and survivors in the Diocese of Arlington. Together with many priests of the Diocese, they have reached out to victims and survivors to support them personally, to pray with them and to encourage their healing from abuse.

During the past audit year, the Diocese received reports of sexual abuse from two individuals who alleged that they were abused in the 1980s by the same religious order priest, who is now deceased. The Victim Assistance coordinators helped the individuals in communicating these allegations to the appropriate religious order for investigation. A third individual alleged abuse by a priest of the Diocese. The Diocese learned of this allegation after it was already under investigation by law enforcement. It was determined to be not credible. A fourth individual alleged abuse by a deceased priest of the Diocese. This allegation was determined by the Diocesan Review Board not to meet the initial threshold of credibility under the diocesan child protection policy. However, it will be revisited if additional evidence comes to light.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Support group evening with Bishop Paul S. Loverde and Father Thomas Ferguson** — RSVP required to the Office of Victim Assistance by May 13

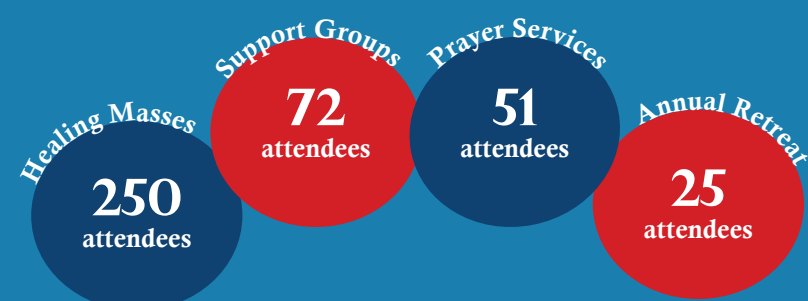
St. Ann Catholic Church, Arlington  
May 17, 2016, 5:45 p.m.

**Bilingual Mass to pray for healing for victims and survivors of sexual abuse celebrated by Bishop Paul S. Loverde and Father Thomas Ferguson**

Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, Winchester  
June 27, 2016, 7:30 p.m.

### YEAR IN REVIEW

JUNE 30, 2014 - JULY 1, 2015



### WHAT WE OFFER

#### 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

The Diocese has developed a list of priests and religious sisters trained in psychological and spiritual issues who are available to provide spiritual guidance for victims.

#### Healing Masses

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

#### Prayer Services

In response to victims who have shared that it is sometimes difficult to attend Mass, the Office began in 2004 to offer prayer services around the Diocese. A unique feature of the prayer services has been a testimony given by a victim or survivor to share their story and efforts to heal from abuse. Prayer services are offered three times each year and are open to the public.

#### Support Groups

Begun in 2005 at the request of victims and survivors, the Diocese offers three gatherings a year which include dinner and time for participants to discuss topics of their choosing. Bishop Loverde attended and prayed with the victims for their healing from the pain of sexual abuse.

#### Annual Retreat

The Diocese offers a daylong retreat to assist victims and survivors in their healing. Our retreat leaders are drawn from those trained to be spiritual guides, leading attendees to inspire each other with stories of faith.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS

In October 2015 we welcomed Father Tom Ferguson, newly-appointed Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, to the Victim Assistance community. Father Ferguson will be taking over Father Mealey's role at the support group, prayer services and healing Masses.

The victims and survivors are the heart of the program. They breathe life into the work we do and allow this program to thrive. It is through their suggestions and guidance that we have grown as clinicians, in compassion and deeper understanding of our Catholic faith.

We have a deeper understanding of the suffering the victims and survivors have gone through, the incredible resilience and the importance of their faith in the healing process.

We are blessed in this Diocese to have the strong support of Bishop Loverde and to be a witness to the stories of victims and survivors, support them along the way and assist them in any way we can.

**To learn more about those who benefited from the services offered by the Office of Victim Assistance in the current audit year, see page 3.**

## VICTIM ASSISTANCE TESTIMONIES

### VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

# “I WENT FROM BEING ‘VICTIM’ TO BEING ‘SURVIVOR’”

It has been seven years since my first contribution to the Victim Assistance annual report and a lot of life has gone by. Largely because of the Victim Assistance program guided by Bishop Loverde, Father Mark Mealey, Pat Mudd, and her team, I have found and continue to find hope and to share joy. That's the simplest way to put it.

When I came to the program in 2004, it was not the first time I told my story of sexual abuse by a priest in the northeast; there had been many occasions. The first, most important, and most fortunate, was in eighth grade when I told my mother about my relationship with “Father Dan,” whom I had regarded as a mentor, someone I trusted and even, yes, loved. Most importantly, my mother listened to and believed me, and that is when I went from being a “victim” to being a “survivor.”

Following “Father Dan’s” transfer, my life went on as if nothing had happened; family, church and school, and social life all progressed quite fruitfully. Yet, my soul ached. Someone charged and trusted with caring for and nurturing that young soul had betrayed it, me, on the most basic and intimate level. Yes, I was a survivor, but that innermost part of me was hurting. That inner hurting is difficult at any age but perhaps especially so in adolescence when our brains are still forming and we have so much to learn about ourselves, others, and how we interact with them. That damaged feeling always lurked, ground away like crushed glass in bread dough, the “dough” we are trying to shape into happy, confident, and productive lives. I dread thinking what those years would have been like had I not been able to unburden myself to someone trusted, loving, and responsive, my mother and my father. While I still wrestled with this hurt whenever I dealt with failure, shortcoming or confusion, it taunted me and aggravated those normal, everyday difficulties. When choosing a college to attend and what to study, I wondered: “Did I decide not to be a priest because of this relationship gone horrendously wrong or just because it wasn’t the life for me anyway?” I was very defensive at times and depressed, and ultimately just angry and resentful. Later, I came to see that state of mind as “fortress resentment.”

Yet, because of the foundation my parents and family, and yes, the Church had provided me, I worked hard to develop my God-given gifts. I attended an Ivy League school on a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship, served as a Navy officer and married a wonderful woman (still my wife, 44 years later). After leaving the Navy, I worked in industry for a while and then went to graduate school, eventually earning a Ph.D. in engineering, which I took back to the Navy for 15 years until retirement. All in all I had a pretty satisfying career.

But those later years would have been impossible without our Victim Assistance program. Although I had already received some counseling after bringing this hurt to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during graduate school, it was still an open, festering wound when I started my new Navy R&D job. The Boston scandal broke and the notion of suing the Church was front page news, probably forcing the Church to, at long last, confront the buried issue. However, suing as a means of healing was not appealing to me.

In Lent 2004, while in confession, I again mentioned this hurt as a shadow in my relationship with Christ, and my confessor, God bless him, directed me to the Victim Assistance program. My wife and I went together and I shared my/our story. Over the past dozen years, we have been comforted and healed in what our fellow participants and I have come to see as a “circle of trust,” a safe place to share our innermost feelings. This circle is like the “upper room” where Mary and the Apostles comforted one another and ultimately received the blessing of peace from the Risen Christ. There have been numerous opportunities to share in this blessing, affording ourselves and sharing this gift of healing mercy. We give witness at prayer services, reaching out to other victims, and sharing our stories. We are encouraged as new members share their own stories and in doing so “graduate” from being victims to “survivors,” not simply walking away from the scene of an accident but joined with others in mutual hope and support.

Christ came that we might know life in the fullest, so we are not content to be mere survivors, but to become celebrants of life. This is what I mean when I say our Victim Assistance program has enabled us to find joy. As Mary proclaimed during her visit to Elizabeth: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Lk 1:46-47).

‘YES, I WANT TO BE HEALED’

Before entering the Victim Assistance program, my heart was dehumanized and ineffective from the injustice of sexual violence done to me.

By faithfully attending, along with my husband, all the prayer services and Masses celebrated by Bishop Paul Loverde and Father Mark Mealey, I was able to — for the first time — hear the words of our Bishop: “Do you want to be healed?” I never thought I had an option! Silently, in the recesses of my heart the response was, “Yes, I want to be healed.” In the words of Father Mealey at a prayer service, “It is a progression of steps: victim, survivor, thriver, that we experience in our journey together to healing.”

Through our Lord Jesus Christ carrying me until my faith was strong enough, I returned to Mother Church with an eagerness to fulfill my baptismal vow and marriage vow, and to be an effective Catholic witness of what our Lord has done through this program.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HOLY FATHER TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

*Within our family of faith and our human families, the sins and crimes of sexual abuse of children must no longer be held in secret and in shame. As we anticipate the Jubilee Year of Mercy, your presence, so generously given despite the anger and pain you have experienced, reveals the merciful heart of Christ. Your stories of survival, each unique and compelling, are powerful signs of the hope that comes from the Lord’s promise to be with us always.*

— Pope Francis, Apostolic Journey to the United States, September 27, 2015

## DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD

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.

To learn more, visit: [arlingtondiocese.org/victim-assistance](http://arlingtondiocese.org/victim-assistance)



## **PROTECTING OUR YOUTH: PROACTIVE EDUCATION & TRAINING**

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 entity in providing a safe environment for youth and adults through education and training. In addition, background checks were conducted for all employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children.

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

- Train six additional facilitators for the *Virtus Called to Protect* training seminars
- Develop an e-newsletter that informs parish liaisons regarding emerging technologies and changes in policy
- Review a new safe environment continuing education resource

**As a result of these activities, OCPS:**

- Added a *Virtus* facilitator with the ability to train in Korean
- Provided six social media awareness training presentations
- Received approval for and implemented a new safe environment continuing education program



**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](http://arlingtondiocese.org/childprotection)**

**YEAR IN REVIEW**  
JUNE 30, 2014 - JULY 1, 2015



**4,000 +**

Adult employees and volunteers who received *Protecting God's Children* training



**560**

Average number of background checks processed by OCPS each month

**TOTAL GROWTH SINCE 2004**



**50,000+**

Adult employees and volunteers who received *Protecting God's Children Safe Environment* training