

CHAPTER FIVE

Status of 2008 Recommendations

PARISH AUDITS

Recommendation: In order to obtain a better understanding of and to increase the accountability for how the *Charter* is implemented at the parish level, dioceses/eparchies are encouraged to conduct parish audits—to be carried out either internally by the diocese/eparchy or externally by The Gavin Group, Inc.—as part of the on-site audit.

Status: Nineteen dioceses/eparchies participated in parish audits conducted by The Gavin Group, Inc. In addition, many dioceses/eparchies conducted their own audits of parishes prior to the submission of the audit documents.

INTERNATIONAL PRIESTS

Recommendation: Continue, through the annual audit, to examine the policies and practices of dioceses/eparchies in the matter of background evaluations and safe environment training of international priests. (See also the second recommendation made with the 2007 Annual Report.)

Status: All dioceses/eparchies continue to evaluate the background of international priests. This remains difficult to accomplish due to the inconsistency of how child sexual abuse in particular, and criminal history in general, are handled in other countries. The staff of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection is also developing a resource for the dioceses/eparchies in this area.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERTISE, AND AVAILABILITY OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS

Recommendation: Contact information for the victim assistance coordinators must be readily available and easily obtainable by the public. Finding the name and phone number for the diocesan victim assistance coordinator should not be difficult or challenging for any victim/survivor. To have this information easily

identifiable on the diocesan Web site, in parish bulletins and bulletin boards, through special brochures, and in diocesan newspapers serves two purposes aside from *Charter* compliance: it sends a message to the victims that the Church cares about them, and it reinforces the commitment of the bishops to help heal the pain that has been caused by clergy sex abuse.

Additionally, to aid those victims who call when the coordinator is not available, it would be most helpful for the message on the diocesan/eparchial phone line to clearly identify the office/person as the location where assistance is available, to indicate the name of the victim assistance coordinator, and to make a short statement advising the victim that the diocese cares about his or her healing.

Status: Auditors continue to see efforts made to improve the availability of the victim assistance coordinators. There were still instances where calls placed to the number for reporting were not returned in a timely manner or the number published was outdated and now incorrect. In those cases, it was brought to the attention of the diocese, and corrections were immediately made.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE OF DIOCESAN/EPARCHIAL PERSONNEL CHARGED WITH IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation: The diocese/eparchy needs to make sure the person responsible for seeing that the *Charter* is fully and completely implemented in the diocese/eparchy possesses the necessary skills and receives the resources and cooperation of all diocesan/eparchial personnel.

Status: Dioceses/eparchies have various organizational structures in place to ensure compliance with the *Charter* in accordance with the makeup of the diocese/eparchy. This remains a concern in light of budget constraints and reorganizations.