



National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People

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Cardinal Francis George, OMI, President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Your Eminence:

This is the seventh consecutive year in which the USCCB has produced an annual report relating to the compliance of the dioceses and eparchies in the United States with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Once again this report demonstrates the seriousness with which the vast majority of bishops and eparchs have taken their responsibilities under the *Charter*.

Unfortunately, one diocese and five eparchies chose not to participate in the audit process. As a result, they were found not to be in compliance with the *Charter*. This diocese and the eparchies are as follows: the Diocese of Lincoln, and the Eparchies Newton for Melkites, Our Lady of Deliverance of Newark for Syrians, Our Lady of Nareg in New York for Armenian Catholics, St. Josaphat of Parma for Ukrainians, and St. Peter the Apostle of San Diego for Chaldeans.

It is my hope and prayer that one day there will be 100% participation. Until that time, however, the lack of participation of a few should not detract from the hard work and effort put forth by the remaining roughly 98% of the dioceses and eparchies in the country.

An individual diocese's or eparchy's compliance status is determined through a rigorous external audit of its policies, procedures, and processes. It is a time-, energy-, and resource-consuming process, but one that is well worth the effort. In many ways it is analogous to the accreditation processes undergone by colleges/universities, hospitals, and other organizations. While the process presents many challenges, it also presents the opportunity to learn and to grow. I believe that many of our bishops and eparchs have found this to be the case.

I would like to highlight in particular that this year 19 dioceses chose to include parishes directly in the audit process. This is a significant development because, after all, the parish is where the Church really lives. It is the parish, not the chancery, where our children are present and learn to be people of faith. While parish audits were not envisioned per se when the *Charter* was adopted, and while it has meant additional effort for these 19 dioceses, these bishops have found them to be very helpful and have learned information they would not otherwise have gained. Additionally, this added level of open accountability reinforces the bishops' commitment to do all that they can to ensure the *Charter* is fully implemented in their dioceses. That can only bode well for the success of their efforts in reaching out to the victims/survivors and creating safe environments for our children.

I also want to give credit to the Secretariat of the Protection of Children and Young People. Under the capable and dedicated leadership of Teresa Kettelkamp, this small staff works tirelessly to assist dioceses and eparchies in their efforts to offer healing and reconciliation to those who have been harmed and to

develop and maintain environments in the Church that will protect our children and young people from harm. The Church in the United States is indeed blessed to have Ms. Kettelkamp and her staff doing this very important work.

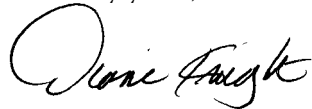
The pages of this annual report are for the most part “good news.” The Recommendations, however, point to areas where additional growth is needed, and I would call your attention to those as well.

The temptation going forward may well be to say that “now we have done what we need to do, and we can move on to other things.” I caution all of us in the Church that we simply cannot allow ourselves to be lulled into that complacency. There will always be human beings who are attracted to children, and children will therefore always be at risk. Our efforts to protect them have an impact beyond our own environs. Our efforts are crucial to living out our Church’s commitment to the life and dignity of each and every human being.

I once heard it said of society that “children are always a certain percentage of our population, but they are 100% of our future.” That is equally true in our Church. Our children are gifts of God to their individual families, but to all of us as well.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and God bless you for your efforts to protect our children!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diane Knight". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ms. Diane M. Knight