



## Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection

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March 2010

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

Ms. Diane Knight  
Chair  
National Review Board

Your Eminence and Chair Knight,

The Catholic Church in the United States has just completed the seventh annual external compliance audit of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Again the audit shows that the Church has done a noteworthy job in keeping its “promise to protect and pledge to heal.” Slowly but surely the *Charter* articles and their mandated actions are becoming integrated into regular church life.

In this year’s letter I want to touch on four key issues:

1. The Power of One
2. The reality that the *Charter’s* message must be a local one
3. The fact that priests and bishops include many men of integrity
4. People’s need to know that the bishops “get it,” which audit compliance helps to prove

As noted both in the Audit Findings chapter of this report and in the table below, the extent of the safe environment training is extraordinary.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NUMBER TO BE TRAINED</b>	<b>NUMBER TRAINED</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE TRAINED</b>
Priests	38,098	37,974	99.7
Deacons	14,723	14,654	99.5
Candidates for Ordination	6,249	6,120	97.9
Educators	167,101	166,258	99.5
Employees	246,532	243,237	98.7
Volunteers	1,656,400	1,634,206	98.7
Children	5,469,997	5,294,665	96.8

During the 2009 audit period, the total number of adults and children in the Catholic Church in the United States who have received safe environment training was found to be 7,397,112.

Given that what we learn we pass on to others, if each of these individuals shares his or her safe environment training knowledge with just one other person, the potential exists for millions more people to know how to keep children safe. That is the Power of One: one person sharing information with another so that millions are better informed about how to safeguard a child from harm.

Time and again we have learned that telling people the good news about the Church can be a hard sell, especially when the subject is the clergy sexual abuse crisis. Today the Church must restore shattered trust, and the progress is gradual. One step toward this goal is to let people know what the Church has done to keep children safe and to reach out to victims/survivors. We need to tell clearly what the Church has done to keep her “promise to protect and pledge to heal” as outlined in the *Charter*.

Only at home can a message really be heard. Here in Washington it’s often said that “all news is local,” because what matters most is how individual lives are touched. At the national level we work to promote all that the Catholic Church in the United States has accomplished with the implementation of the *Charter* and what has been done to help victims/survivors heal and to keep children safe. But until people hear and see those accomplishments lived out in their local dioceses/eparchies and parishes, our words will not find listeners. It is in their hometowns and in their parishes where people can sense what has been accomplished and can find posters, brochures, newspaper articles, and bulletin announcements to reinforce this message. Bishops and priests must tell this good news, “whether it is convenient or inconvenient” (2 Tm 4:2).

A final issue: we need more focus on the multitude of priests and bishops who stand as men of integrity serving the Catholic Church. Those who deal with the issue of child sexual abuse by clergy see the sinful side of humanity in the Church. At the same time, however, they also see the grace-filled good side of the church. And, as much as people need to know what the Catholic Church is doing to rectify the wrongs of the past, they also need to know of the faith-filled priests and bishops there to serve them today. They are unsung heroes among us and deserve support, not continual cynicism and criticism.

Highlighting respect for the life and dignity of children continues to be the overarching goal of church efforts to heal victims/survivors and to protect children. Anything that disrespects one’s life and dignity is wrong, and it needs to be corrected.

The public seeks assurance that the bishops understand the terrible ramifications of child sexual abuse and, as they say, “get it.” Confirmed compliance with the *Charter* through an external audit process helps prove that.

May those efforts continue ever strong and show the Church’s obvious concern for those whom Jesus said should be allowed to come to him. The examination of efforts through the *Charter* testifies to concern about these children. Our hope is that in 2010 we can report that not virtually every diocese, but in fact every diocese, in our nation participated in the audit process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa M. Kettelkamp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Teresa M. Kettelkamp  
Executive Director