



October 22, 2003

Most Reverend Michael A. Saltarelli
Bishop of Wilmington
P.O. Box 2030
Wilmington, DE 19899-2030

Your Excellency:

Enclosed please find the Executive Summary of the audit of your Diocese. Any commendations, recommendations or instructions were presented to you at the termination of the audit by the auditors.

If recommendations or instructions were presented to you, a response was requested on a specific date. Needless to say, you can reply prior to the date but you are respectfully requested to reply on time.

If you have any questions concerning any aspects of the audit, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM A. GAVIN

Executive Summary Wilmington Diocese

An audit was conducted at the Diocese of Wilmington, DE, from October 13, 2003 – October 17, 2003. This audit, performed by V. Dave Kohl and Louis E. Bracksieck, was to test the compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (Charter), established in June, 2002, by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The Wilmington Diocese covers a 5307 square mile region of the State of Delaware and the Eastern Shore area of Maryland. The Catholic population of the diocese is approximately 215,000. There are 208 diocesan and religious priests serving 57 parishes and 20 missions. Additionally, there are 29 religious brothers and 77 permanent deacons. More than 15,500 students attend 41 Catholic elementary schools and seven high schools. The diocese was established in 1868. The Most Reverend Michael A. Saltarelli was appointed Bishop of Wilmington November 21, 1995.

This audit consisted of file reviews of diocesan records, public documents and personal interviews to include the Bishop, Vicar General, Chancellor, Vocations Director, Vicar for Priests, Legal Counsel, Review Board Chairman, Review Board member, Human Resources Director, Communications Director, Victim Assistance Coordinator, Director Catholic Youth Ministry, Superintendent of Schools, Director of Religious Education, Attorney General for the State of Delaware, Former Chief Deputy Attorney General, two parish priests and a law enforcement detective.

Articles 1 – 3: To Promote Healing and Reconciliation with the Victims/Survivors of the Sexual Abuse of Minors

Wilmington has established a policy to address matters related to implementing the Charter entitled, "*Revised Policy and Procedures Governing Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors, Diocese of Wilmington*" October, 2003. Twenty four victims/family members have been assisted or continue to be served through this policy. Catholic Charities is the primary provider and coordinator of services. The diocesan policy provides protocols for receiving reports of incidents and notifying civil authorities. The diocese has published its policy on its internet site and in the diocesan newspaper, and has furnished hard copies to all priests and school officials. Procedures for reporting incidents are clearly laid out and easy to follow. The bishop or his representative has met with all victims or families who have been willing to accept them. A Victim Assistance Coordinator was appointed in July 2002. In August 2002, a Review Board consisting of 12 members with diverse backgrounds was established. The Review Board acts as a confidential, consultative body to assist the bishop in discharging his responsibilities. The board operates under separate guidelines.

Articles 4 – 7: To Guarantee an Effective Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors

The bishop has met with the Delaware Attorney General (AG) and the diocesan attorney has contacted most of the Maryland State's Attorneys. A protocol was agreed to for reporting all allegations. In the meeting with the AG, the bishop disclosed all information requested on all known cases for the past 40 years. An editorial in the *New Journal*, dated January 29, 2003, praised the diocese for its swift and open handling of three abuse cases. Wilmington's policy provides for a prompt and thorough investigation in accord with canon law and due process. It also details the procedures for placing offenders on administrative leave and, if necessary or warranted permanent removal from ministerial duties. At the same time, offenders are offered professional assistance for their own healing and well-being. In all cases in which clerics have been found to have committed sexual abuse of a minor, they have been dismissed from ministry, laicized or have been found to be elderly and infirmed to the extent they are confined to an institution. Canonical and civil representation is encouraged for any alleged offender. Separate and specific conduct standards have been delineated for priests, permanent deacons, seminarians, religious sisters and brothers, employees, and volunteers through covenants. Each requires a signed acknowledgement of receipt/covenant. These are maintained at the Chancery or in personnel files. The standards are publicized in "*For the Sake of God's Children*," Part II - Ethical and Behavioral Standards for Church Personnel. They have also been the subject of media reports in the secular and diocesan press. A written communications policy exists which incorporates concern for law enforcement, parishes, public, and sex abuse prevention, and outreach programs. The diocese has demonstrated a very open and transparent relationship with the media.

Article 9: To Ensure the Accountability of Our Procedures

The archdiocese has submitted the final results of the John Jay College survey.

Articles 12 – 17: To Protect the Faithful in the Future

A "safe environment" program has been established and detailed in the booklet entitled, "*For Sake of God's Children*," a five part program in Wilmington, and is the subject of a separate commendation. The material contained in this document has been presented in a series of meetings held for priest, deacons, seminarians, employees and parish leadership. Parish leaders have responsibility for introducing the programs at the parish level. Training is reinforced by administrators. Catholic schools have a self esteem series and a program called Door of Hope for students. A Catechesis in Human Sexuality program for grades 1-8 is an adjunct to the CCD program. Augmenting this program are procedures for conducting background checks. In July 2002, a committee of 14 was established to implement all aspects of the background check system including a 5 year cyclical review. As of September 2003, over 6,000 individuals have undergone background checks. They anticipate an additional 4,000 will have checks completed by the end of the year. A stringent screening and evaluation process is used for prospective seminarians prior to acceptance using an 11 point program. Seminarians are continually

screened and evaluated until ordination. In October 2002 the bishop met with cleric members of religious institutes and women religious to discuss the sexual abuse crisis. Bishop meets annually with major superiors of clerical institutes and the religious communities of women. The diocese established a continuing formation committee for priests that is active and effective. In January 2003 a blue ribbon task force drafted priestly standards regarding celibacy and sexuality. The bishop maintains a consistent focus on healthy, balanced priestly celibacy, sexuality and ministerial ethics.

The diocese was commended for its 'safe environment program.'

Conclusion:

This audit finds the Diocese of Wilmington to be in compliance with the Charter.