

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Annual Report for Child Protection & Victim Assistance

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

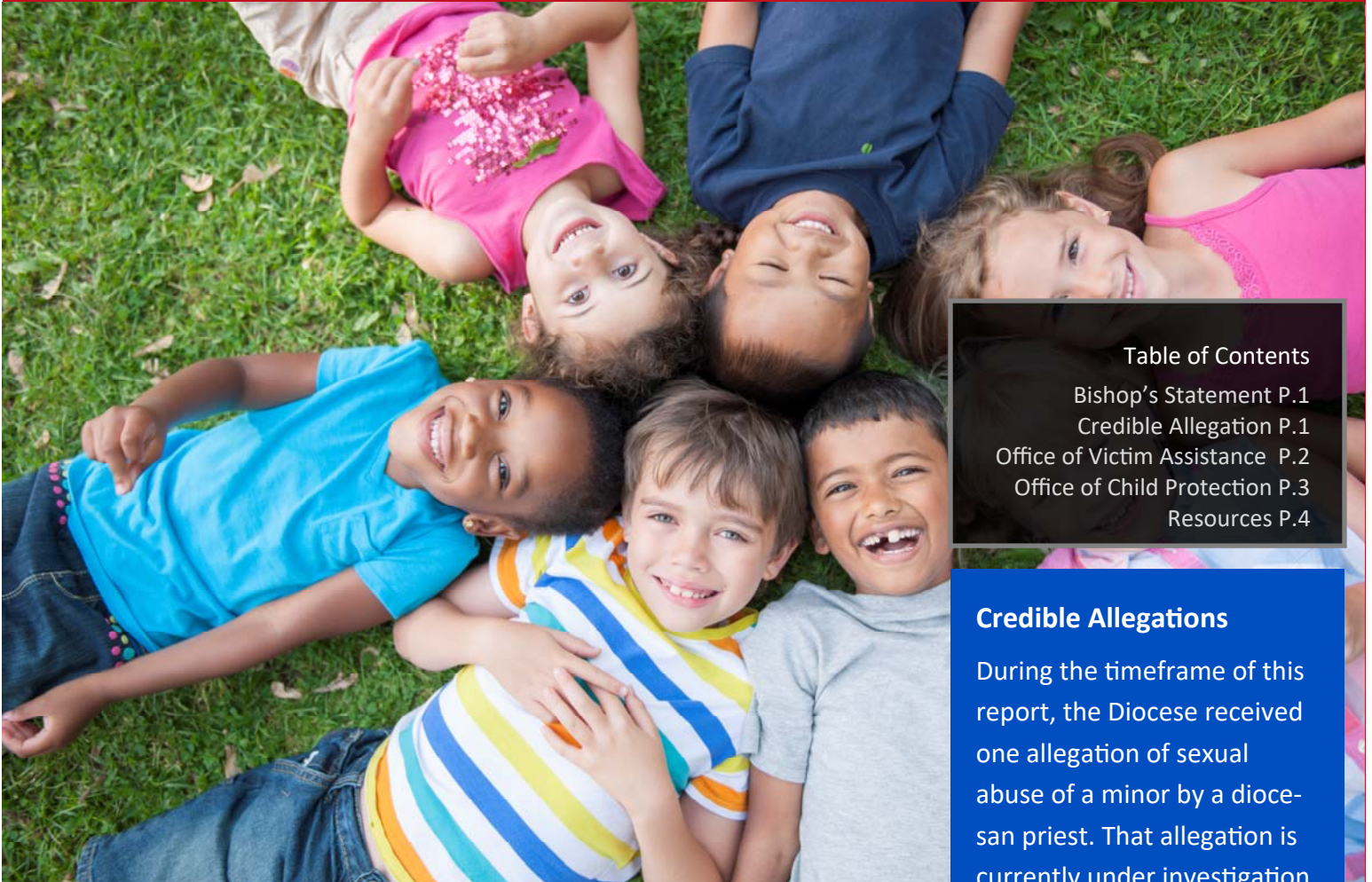


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Credible Allegations

During the timeframe of this report, the Diocese received one allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a diocesan priest. That allegation is currently under investigation by local civil authorities. At the recommendation of the Diocesan Review Board, Bishop Burbidge has placed the cleric on administrative leave pending the outcome of the law enforcement investigation and the Diocese's own investigation.



Statement from Bishop Burbidge on Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 5, 2018

As we mark April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month, I ask all people of good will to join me through prayer and community engagement to assist in protecting the precious gift of life and all our children. Annually, nearly 700,000 children are neglected or abused in the United States and the number has increased each year since 2010. In Virginia alone, there are more than 6,000 abuse cases every year. The Church and the community must work to do everything possible to end this tragedy. Together, may we create and sustain safe environments and remain committed to report suspected neglect or abuse.

On Divine Mercy Sunday (April 8) and always, all are invited to pray in a special way for abused children and for those entrusted with their care. May we be united as we continue to protect and safeguard all of God's children from any form of neglect or abuse.

Office of Victim Assistance

Who We Are and What We Do

In June 2002, the Bishops of the Catholic Church met in Dallas and approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. By this document, they pledged to address the issue of sexual abuse by clergy, lay employees and volunteers of the Catholic Church. The Charter is a 35 page document that presented a great challenge to each individual diocese. How do we ever repair the damage done by perpetrators of sexual abuse upon our children and adults? What can we do to help victims that will restore their faith and trust in God and help them to reconnect with the Catholic Church that they once loved? The answers were evasive but we had to try.

Victim Assistance tries to do all that it is able to assist you in your recovery. We want you to know that we are very sorry for the pain you have suffered and will try to do everything we can to help you find reconciliation and healing from the ordeal you have under gone. We have listened to many people suffering from the pain of abuse. We will walk with you on this painful journey and hopefully help you to find healing through and with Jesus Christ.

In 2002, our Bishop was Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde. Bishop Loverde along with our Vicar General, Rev. Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S. began a search for ideas as to what might be most helpful to those who were abused. As of December 7, 2016, we have Bishop Michael Burbidge, formerly of Raleigh, North Carolina has continued this promise

to help us provide a program dedicated to your healing.

With the help of some of the victims/survivors who called us during the early days, we developed a program to respond to their needs. We called this early group the Survivors Planning Group. They helped one another walk this lonely road to healing and recovery. They helped us to develop a program to support them in their hope and healing. To date, the Diocese of Arlington has offered 40 Masses to Pray for Healing for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse with over 3,000 people in attendance. Rev. Mark Mealey and Rev. Thomas Ferguson, have together offered 36 Prayer Services for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse with over 600 people in attendance. In addition, Bishop Loverde and now Bishop Burbidge, along with Father Mealey and Father Ferguson have hosted 37 Support Groups with over 700 people in attendance and 9 yearly Retreats with over 200 people in attendance. We have a number of counselors committed to help those in need of therapy and priests and sisters who have had special training in providing spiritual guidance. We are waiting to help you if you call us.



Diocesan Review Board

The Arlington Diocesan Review Board advises Bishop Burbidge 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 primarily laity as well as religious. They include mental health professionals, child development professionals, legal professionals as well as a victim survivor.

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.

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.

Office of Child Protection & Safety

Who We Are and What We Do

In 1991, the Diocese of Arlington began the implementation of a structured and proactive program for the prevention of child sexual abuse. Today, Bishop Michael Burbidge continues to direct the 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 location in providing a safe environment for youth and adults through education and training. In addition, background checks were conducted for all employees and volunteers that have substantial contact with children.

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

- Research the current popular video games and its relation to online communities and pornography
- Research Commonwealth of Virginia statistics for child abuse

- Research best practices for communication strategies for parents to discuss internet and communication safety

As a result of these activities, OCPS:

- Provided six *Teens & Technology* training presentations to Diocesan parishes
- Distributed quarterly social media application updates for teachers and parents specific to Northern Virginia
- Assisted the Northern Virginia Sexual Human Trafficking Taskforce through training and research collection

How to Report Incidents of Suspected Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

The Office of Victim Assistance seeks to reach out and support victims of sexual abuse. If you believe there is an incident of child abuse or sexual misconduct, please visit:

arlingtondiocese.org/Victim-Assistance/How-to-Report-Sexual-Abuse/

to fill out a form and return it to the Victim Assistance Office. Should you have any questions or concerns please call the Office of Child Protection at (703) 841-3847.





Resources

Contact information for Victim Assistance

Victim Assistance Coordinator: Dr. Frank Moncher, Ph.D.

- Phone: (703) 841-2530 (personal and confidential)

To learn more, visit: arlingtondiocese.org/victim-assistance

Contact information for the Office of Child Protection & Safety

Director, Office of Child Protection & Safety: Deacon Marques Silva

- Phone: (703) 841-3847

To learn more, visit: arlingtondiocese.org/Child-Protection

Past Annual Reports

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington publishes all copies of past Annual Reports on its web site at:

arlingtondiocese.org/Annual-Reports

USCCB Charter & Norms

To find our more information on the governing documents from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Protection of Children/Youth, providing safe environments, and reporting abuse go to:

arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/usccb/

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