

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

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021



## Statement from Bishop Burbidge on Child Abuse Prevention Month

**April 2022**

“During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we draw special attention to the extraordinary responsibility we all share to protect the innocence of childhood and guard against child abuse in its many forms. We also highlight our important obligation to accompany those who have endured abuse in their lifelong healing process.

The Catholic Church has itself been guilty of unspeakable sins from within its own ranks. This abhorrent reality inspired the Church to make drastic changes to ensure young people are guarded appropriately and their innocence protected and valued. We are resolved to remain vigilant in our efforts to help bring healing to victims, recognizing that the devastating impacts of child abuse are lifelong.”

### **Credible Allegations**

During the timeframe of this report, the Diocese received no allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by a diocesan priest.

All allegations are reported to the local authorities immediately and those involving the clergy are submitted for review to the Diocesan Review Board.

## Office of Victim Assistance

### Who We Are and What We Do...

The Office of Victim Assistance exists to reach out to persons harmed through sexual abuse by clergy, lay employees, and volunteers in the Catholic Church. In June 2002, the Catholic bishops of the United States met in Dallas and approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which established this office. The Charter was a continuation of efforts already underway to respond to the increasingly clear problem of child abuse in the Church and society. More recently, the bishops have renewed their pledge to protect children in the future and minister to those who have been harmed in the past. Finding remedies for past harm can be a complicated process, yet our hope is that we can have a positive impact on those who approach our diocese for assistance. Our Bishop, priests, the diocesan staff, and the lay faithful experience deep sorrow for the pain that is suffered, and our prayers for hope and healing go out to all victims/survivors of sexual abuse.

In the past year, the Victim Assistance staff has endeavored to reach out to persons throughout the diocese and assist in their healing and recovery through a variety of programs. Because specific needs vary based upon individual preferences and circumstances, the office offered Masses and prayer services throughout the diocese specifically to pray for healing, an annual retreat, and in-person sharing groups (support groups). We continue to offer virtual group meetings to share, support, and receive prayer and guidance. As before, counseling and therapy by licensed professionals, and spiritual guidance by specially trained priests, religious sisters, and lay people were provided to assist the healing process. The Office of Victim Assistance hopes to accompany each person on the journey towards healing and wholeness.

Frank J Moncher, PhD

Victim Assistance Coordinator

### Read more about the Victim Assistance Office:

<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/victim-assistance/>

“A survivor’s perspective on healing in the Church” Arlington Catholic Herald (April 2021)

<https://www.catholicherald.com/article/columns/a-survivors-perspective-on-healing-in-the-church/>



### By the Numbers...

- 93** Masses/Prayer Services
- 49** Support Groups / Listening Sessions
- 55** Virtual Support Meetings
- 203** Persons attending Retreats
- 18** Persons receiving financial support for medical and counseling needs
- 3** Trainings for seminarians and priests on working with victims/survivors of abuse

### Catholic Bishop Abuse

#### Reporting Service

This third-party reporting service has been created to gather and relay reports of sexual misconduct involving bishops of the United States, and reports of their intentional interference in a sexual abuse investigation. For more information and to make a report online, please visit [ReportBishopAbuse.org](https://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or call 1-800-276-1562. The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service will receive and relay those reports to the proper Church authorities for investigation. Where a report includes a crime, such as the sexual abuse of a minor, it will also be reported to civil authorities. Otherwise, reports will be kept confidential.

# Office for the Protection of Children and Young People

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.

Bishop Burbidge, after consulting with and reviewing the updated laws and statutes in the Commonwealth of Virginia, chose to update and promulgate a revised version of *The Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct*. All clergy,

staff and volunteers with substantial contact with minors were required to provide an updated signed electronic copy.

The *Office for the Protection of Children and Young People* provided:

- Six *Teens & Technology* training presentations to three Diocesan parishes and three for Christian schools
- Eight *Bought with a Price* trainings that address the problem of pornography from a biological and psychological viewpoint in two Diocesan high schools
- Launched version 4.0 of our adult safe environment training, *Virtus: Protecting God's Children*

## 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/](http://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.





