

## 2006 Annual Report

# Child Protection and Victim Outreach In the Diocese of Arlington

## Introduction

In his Feb. 17, 2005, letter to Catholics of the diocese, Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde wrote, "In keeping with the commitments we have made in the Charter and by our policy, annual reports on child protection efforts and victim outreach are a critical component to the framework we have put in place to heighten the safety of children under our care."

The diocese was established in 1974 and encompasses 21 counties and seven cities in the northern tier of Virginia. The diocese consists of 67 parishes and 39 Catholic elementary and secondary schools, 155 diocesan priests, 73 religious priests, 58 deacons and serves a population of over 400,000 registered Catholics. A total of 891 priests have served in the diocese since it was established. Bishop Loverde was installed as the third Bishop of Arlington on March 25, 1999.

## Background, 1974-2004

In accord with the Child Protection Policy, the diocese and its Advisory Board for Child Protection shall give an annual public report of the status of the Diocesan child protection activities, including any allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. On Feb. 19, 2004, the diocese issued its "Report on the History of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy of the Diocese of Arlington, 1974-2004," in which all cases of sexual abuse of minors by clergy reported to the diocese since the diocese's founding in 1974 were reported.

As stated in the "Report on the History of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy of the Diocese of Arlington, 1974-2004," a review of records since the diocese's founding in 1974 found that nine of the 891 diocesan and religious priests who have served in the diocese, or 1 percent, were accused of sexual abuse of minors by 11 victims. Of the nine priests, one was exonerated; two are deceased; one priest retired without faculties at the time of the 2003 report has since been dismissed from the clerical state by the Holy See; and the remaining five are no longer in ministry. They are not permitted to serve in any ministry, celebrate Mass publicly, administer the sacraments, wear clerical garb or present themselves publicly as priests. One permanent deacon was also accused of child sexual abuse and is no longer in ministry. All of the alleged incidents occurred before 1994.

### *Status of Accused Clergy during Audit Period, October 2004-October 2005*

During the audit period from Oct. 4, 2004 to Oct. 11, 2005, the Diocese of Arlington received one allegation of child sexual abuse. This allegation involved an incident which predated the establishment of the diocese in 1974. It involved a priest who the person making the allegation would not identify, and who the person believed to be deceased. Because the person has declined to give the name of the priest, the diocese has been unable to investigate the allegation further.

## Child Protection and Safety

### *Background*

In 1991, Bishop John R. Keating (who served from 1983-98) put in place the diocesan Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of



Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse. This policy was revised in 1993, 2000 and 2003 in light of the passage of the bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Since the passage of the Charter in 2002, the Diocese of Arlington has established a majority lay-person Review Board to assist the bishop in his assessment of any instances of child sexual abuse by clergy; established a majority lay-person Advisory Board, which serves in an advisory role in the formulation of child sexual abuse policies and procedures; appointed a Director of Child Protection and Safety and Victim Assistance Coordinator; revised its policy on sexual abuse and misconduct; updated its sexual abuse/misconduct seminars in light of the Charter; and participated in the national audit and in the national John Jay Study commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Arlington Diocese's Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse is given to all clergy and diocesan employees, as well as to volunteers who have contact with minors in the diocese. Each recipient is required to sign a statement that he or she has read it and agrees to abide by it. Any credible allegation regarding minors, without exception, will be reported to the appropriate civil authorities. As the Charter and our policy state, confidentiality agreements are not to be part of any settlement, unless requested by the victim.

### *Steps Taken, 2004-05*

In June 2004, Bishop Loverde appointed Father Terry Specht, a priest of the diocese, to be the Director of Child Protection and Safety for the Diocese of Arlington. Father Specht oversees the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and supervises programs called for by the Charter.

Since June 2004, a comprehensive training program to assist parishes and schools in maintaining a safe environment for children has been implemented throughout the diocese. Training of employees and volunteers in the area of sexual misconduct has been a central component of the diocese's child abuse prevention program since 1991. In June 2004, Bishop Loverde selected "Protecting God's Children for Adults" as the key element in training of all new employees and those volunteers who have contact with

children within the diocese. Over 11,000 diocesan employees and volunteers have participated in this program.

In the Fall of 2004, the diocese began to offer "Protecting God's Children for Parents" as a program to provide training for families in understanding the nature and dangers of child exploitation; the program also provides tools and resources for the safety training of children. The program is available to any parish or school community and the resources are available to parents who have attended "Protecting God's Children for Adults."

In November 2004, "Formation in Christian Chastity" was selected as the children's safety program for the diocese. Developed by the Diocese of Harrisburg, the purpose of the program is to assist families in developing the virtue of chastity in their children and in providing basic safe environment training for their children. The program is parent-based and respects the innocence of children. Parishes have also been extended the opportunity to develop their own program to meet their specific needs, granted that the self-developed program meets the criteria set by the Charter and the Diocesan Child Protection and Safety program. More than 56,000 children and young people have received safety training in religious education classes and in Catholic schools throughout the diocese.

In August 2004, the bishop announced that all priests, seminarians, employees and those volunteers with contact with children will be required to complete comprehensive criminal background checks. The checks are conducted under the provisions of the Code of the State of Virginia and include national checks for convictions. Also required is a check of the Central Registry of Virginia Social Services for founded cases of child abuse. Since background checks were initiated in August 2004, more than 11,000 diocesan employees and volunteers of the diocese have completed these checks. All new diocesan personnel and volunteers who have contact with children are required to complete these checks prior to the start of their service.

In September 2004, a Code of Conduct for all diocesan personnel was promulgated. The code supplies guidance in the proper interaction between children and adults within the community of the Church. These written guidelines assist those working with children in identifying and addressing inappropriate behaviors.

The Bishop's Advisory Board for the protection of children, a board consisting of experts in the field of child abuse, law and counseling, meets regularly and provides recommendations for the implementation on the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Advisory Board evaluates programs relating to child protection and makes recommendations for maintaining a safe environment within communities of the diocese.

## Outreach to Victims

### *Background*

Bishop Loverde has appointed Patricia Mudd, M.S.W., A.C.S.W., as Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Arlington. In her role, Mudd coordinates outreach to victims, including the pastoral care of anyone who reports having been sexually abused as a minor by a priest or diocesan employee. This appointment is in conformity with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

# Child Protection and Victim Outreach In the Diocese of Arlington

## Outreach by the Arlington Diocese to Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People calls for "dioceses to reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to victims is for healing and reconciliation. This outreach will include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the diocese." Mudd has developed a list of therapists and psychiatrists experienced in working with victims/survivors of sexual abuse, as well as priests and religious skilled in providing spiritual assistance and direction. These resources are available to victims/survivors in the diocese.

The diocese encourages victims/survivors to report abuse to law enforcement authorities. As a mandated reporter in the commonwealth of Virginia, the Victim Assistance Coordinator is required to report any allegations of abuse of a child under 18 to Child Protective Services. In addition, she helps victims/survivors who have moved to this area from other dioceses to report the abuse to the original diocese where the abuse occurred.

The diocese continues to offer services to 12 victims/survivors of clergy abuse, or family members of victims/survivors, in cases in which the alleged abuse was reported prior to Oct. 4, 2004. Three of these victims/survivors involved alleged abuse by clergy from the Arlington Diocese; these clergy are no longer in ministry. Nine others are victims/survivors or family members who now live in the Diocese of Arlington but whose allegations involve abuse by clergy in other dioceses.

The diocese also served 27 additional victims/survivors from Oct. 4, 2004, to Oct. 11, 2005. These people have alleged abuse by family members, acquaintances or through violence in the community. Bishop Loverde asked that the Victim Assistance Coordinator help these victims/survivors by providing support and referrals to counselors and/or a priest, religious or lay person to provide spiritual assistance. The diocese also offers support groups, consultations, Masses, prayer services and evenings of reflection for survivors of sexual abuse.



## Masses to Pray for Healing for Victims of Abuse

In June 2004, Bishop Loverde first called the entire diocesan community to pray for the healing of abuse victims/survivors. From Oct. 4, 2004 to Oct. 11, 2005, nine Masses to Pray for Healing for Victims of Sexual Abuse were celebrated throughout the diocese. Bishop Loverde was the principal celebrant at five of the nine Masses; the remaining four were celebrated by priests of the diocese. The Masses were celebrated at the following parishes: All Saints, Manassas; St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Fredericksburg; St. Catherine of Siena, Great Falls; St. John the Evangelist, Warrenton; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Lake Ridge; Blessed Sacrament, Alexandria; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Winchester; St. Anthony of Padua, Falls Church (English/Spanish Mass) and St. Elizabeth, Colonial Beach.

Following each Mass, a reception was held for those in attendance and to provide outreach to victims/survivors and their families who wished to meet or speak with Bishop Loverde, Father Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., Vicar General for Administration, Father Terry Specht, Director of Child Protection and Safety, the priests who concelebrated the Mass, or the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Over 800 people attended the Masses to Pray for Healing for Victims of Abuse in the Arlington Diocese during this audit period.

## Prayer Services

The Diocese of Arlington held two Prayer Services for Healing for Victims/Survivors during the 2005 audit period. Father Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S., presided at both. The Prayer Service at St. Francis de Sales in Purcellville included a reflection by a survivor and a presentation by the Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter (LAWS). A survivor of abuse spoke at the Prayer Service at St. Stephen the Martyr in Middleburg. At both prayer services, the Victim Assistance Coordinator presented a brief overview of her work followed by a reception. During the last audit period, 40 people attended the Prayer Services for Healing for Victim/Survivors of Sexual Abuse.

## Evening of Reflection

On Dec. 12, 2005, the Diocese of Arlington held an Evening of Reflection for 30 victim/survivors and their guests at the Dominican Retreat House in

McLean. The evening included a dinner, a talk and discussion with Father John Crossin, O.S.F.S., and a discussion and a prayer service led by Bishop Loverde.

## Support Group for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Catholic Charities Family Services staff in Arlington and Fredericksburg offered to conduct a 10-week therapeutic support group for victims/survivors of sexual abuse, but thus far, there has not been sufficient enough interest to begin the group.

## Fall/Spring 2006

In an effort to continue and expand our outreach to victim/survivors of sexual abuse and their families, the bishop has announced the following schedule of Masses and Prayer Services. While all members of our diocesan family are invited to attend, the diocese particularly encourages victims/survivors and their families to come and pray for healing and reconciliation.

## Masses and Prayer Services for Healing for Victims/ Survivors of Sexual Abuse

April 26, 7:30 p.m., Mass, St. Luke Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde to preside.

May 20, 10 a.m., Prayer Service, St. William of York Church, 3130 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Stafford. Father Mark Mealey, O.S.F.S. to preside. Reflections by a survivor of sexual abuse.

June 12, 7:30 p.m., Bilingual English/Spanish Mass, Holy Family Church, 14160 Ferndale Rd., Dale City. Bishop Loverde to preside.

For information about any of the services listed above, or to register for the support group, please call: Patricia Mudd, A.C.S.W., Victim Assistance Coordinator, 703/841-2530.

Please pray for our victims and survivors of sexual abuse. Whether abused in the Church, in their families or through other acts of violence in the community, sexual abuse survivors need our support and prayers for healing.

## Mass to Pray for the Healing of Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse

**April 26, 7:30 p.m.**

St. Luke Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean.  
Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde to preside.

**June 12, 7:30 p.m.**

Holy Family Church, 14160 Ferndale Rd., Dale City.  
Bilingual English/Spanish Mass. Bishop Loverde to preside.

## Prayer Service for the Healing of Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse

**May 20, 10 a.m.**

St. William of York Church, 3130 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Stafford.  
Rev. Mealey, O.S.F.S., to preside. A survivor will present reflections on sexual abuse.

Catholic Charities will offer a 10-week support group for victims of sexual abuse in Arlington and Fredericksburg.

For information about any of the services listed above or to register for the support group, please call Patricia Mudd, A.C.S.W., at 703/841-2530.

## To Report An Allegation

**To report an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, people are directed to:**

1. Immediately call Child Protection Services (CPS) and/or their local police authorities and;

2. If the abuse concerns any member of the clergy, diocesan employee or volunteer, then call the Victim Assistance Coordinator at 703/841-2530.