

AN UPDATE ON THE STATUS
OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
IN THE DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matt. 8.1)

February 12, 2004

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Dear Friends in Christ:

For the last two years the Catholic Church has anguished over the revelation of past incidents of sexual abuse of minors. This has been an exceedingly painful experience, first of all for victims and their families, but for many other members of the Church as well.

While the situation in the Diocese of Youngstown is not as severe as it is in some other places, we too have had some accusations of past incidents of sexual abuse, and we know that even a single incident would be too many! Once again, therefore, as I have in the past, I wish to express our sincere regrets and apologies to any member of the Church who has been harmed by the actions or decisions of a priest or bishop, or any other member of the Church. And with the hope of assisting in the process of reconciliation, I continue to be willing to meet with any individual or family who has suffered from past incidents of sexual abuse.

The information contained in this update is part of an ongoing effort to keep you informed about the situation in the Diocese of Youngstown, to remind you of our response, and to ensure you that the Church in this Diocese will do everything possible to provide a safe environment for its ministry to children and young people.

Let us pray for forgiveness and the healing of past wounds; let us recognize all the good the Church has done and continues to do; and let us resolve to move into the future with hearts purified and renewed, strengthened in our commitment to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church to the very best of our abilities.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Youngstown

Introduction

The Diocese of Youngstown is blessed with many good and faithful priests serving the Church. To these men we say “thank you” for their dedication to their ministries every day.

Nonetheless, we are also painfully aware of the national situation regarding sexual abuse of children. It has been, and continues to be, the commitment of the Diocese of Youngstown to educate members of our diocesan Church about the evil and consequences of abuse of children and young people, to provide safe environments for them, to provide effective response to allegations of abuse, and to provide pastoral outreach to victims and their families.

As a diocese, and as people of God, we continually strive to protect “*the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*” By our actions and by our words, we promise to do everything possible to follow the example of Jesus who welcomed children, and to bring His healing and caring presence to all victims of child abuse.

Child Protection Policy

The first policy for the protection of children in our diocese was created in 1994 and revised in 1999. The current *Child Protection Policy* was promulgated in March, 2003.

The diocesan policy is in complete compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The *Child Protection Policy* has been, and continues to be, distributed to all employees and volunteers in service in any parish, school or institution of the diocese, and to any interested person. Additionally, a *Summary of Key Points* has been published in a brochure format and widely distributed. Copies of these documents are available from the Chancery Office or on the diocesan website, www.doy.org.

Education & Implementation

The parishes, schools and institutions of the Diocese of Youngstown cooperate fully with implementation of the *Child Protection Policy*. All employees and volunteers receive a copy of the policy and commit to its provisions by signing a background questionnaire and applicant's certification.

Employees and volunteers receive in-service training through a variety of resources and meetings. Those who work regularly with children are also fingerprinted. By these means, the Diocese of Youngstown strives to make all who work or volunteer in any form of ministry or service aware of the provisions of our policy, and provides opportunities for education in identifying and reporting abuse or suspected abuse.

Administrators receive helpful information and guidance for implementation of diocesan procedures. Any parish, school or group may request a meeting with the assistance coordinator or other diocesan representative.

The policy was printed in its entirety in the [Catholic Exponent](#), and has its own link on the diocesan website, www.doy.org, making it available to a wide audience.

A special day-long clergy workshop held in June, 2002, and discussions at various meetings including the Fall 2002 Clergy Convocation addressed the topic.

The dedication and commitment of pastors, principals, teachers, catechists and all who minister to children of the diocese is evident by their diligence in assuring that all who minister in the diocese abide by the provisions of the *Child Protection Policy*.

Community Relationships

The diocese has a good working relationship with the public Children's Services agencies in the six counties of the diocese. The bishop continues to meet with the directors of these agencies in order to determine how the diocese and the agencies can mutually help each other to protect children.

These agencies have provided the diocese with their statistics on reported allegations of child sexual abuse. In the last 10 years, over 12,400 allegations were received by these agencies. To the best of our knowledge not one of these allegations involved a priest of this diocese. The numbers were helpful in comparing the total number of allegations with the allegations made against priests, and indicate that sexual abuse is a serious problem in society as a whole.

The diocese has cooperated fully with prosecutors in each of our six counties, providing, at our initiative, information relative to all past cases of child sexual abuse.

Diocesan Review Board

As required by the USCCB *Charter and Norms*, a Review Board was established in July, 2002, and held its first meeting on August 27, 2002. The Review Board is a consultative group whose purpose is to advise the bishop on matters relative to the sexual abuse of minors in the Church. Particular tasks include:

- review the diocesan *Child Protection Policy* to ensure that it is consistent with the *Charter and Norms* and the Code of Canon Law;
- assist the diocese with the full and fair implementation of the *Policy and Charter*;
- offer to the bishop recommendations regarding the status of priests who have been accused of incidents of sexual abuse – past, present or future;
- suggest ways in which the diocese can effectively respond to the scandal of sexual abuse; ways in which the Church can be reconciled and healed; ways in which the diocese can appropriately relate to the larger community in this matter.

Agenda items at review board meetings have included: discussion of the current situation, both on the diocesan and national level; review and revision of the *Child Protection Policy*; diocesan response to the scandal of abuse; relating to the community; reconciliation and healing; canonical requirements of the *Norms*; and plans for implementation of the policy. Additionally, the review board heard a presentation of past cases and current litigation in the diocese from diocesan legal counsel.

Members of the Diocesan Review Board are: Det. Sgt. Delphine Baldwin-Casey, Mary Butler, Sr. Nancy Dawson, Atty. Alan Kretzer, Sr. Ann McManamon, Dr. Ronald Mikolich, Msgr. Kenneth Miller, Kristina Murphy, Teresa Peach, Deacon Ronald Reolfi, Fr. Matthew Roehrig, Rev. Mark Williams and Thomas Wrenn. Msgr. John Zuraw, Executive Director of Clergy Services, and Nancy Yuhasz, Chancellor and Assistance Coordinator, are staff resource persons to the board.

Communications

The issue of sexual abuse of children by priests has made headlines in national and local news. In the Diocese of Youngstown, we have provided statistics on numbers of accused priests to the news media. Diocesan news is sent to over 70 media outlets in the six counties of the diocese, including television, radio and print media.

Parishes, schools and institutions of the diocese receive any new information, updates, etc. through a variety of means, including the Catholic Exponent; our monthly newsletter, *Communique*; and by letters and meetings.

A Review of Statistics

There are no priests in active ministry against whom an allegation of sexual abuse has been made.

During a review of clergy personnel files and from reports given to us, it was discovered that over the past 50 years, 19 priests serving in the Diocese of Youngstown had allegations of child sexual abuse made against them. During this 50-year period, 483 diocesan priests, approximately 370 religious order priests, and nine priests of other dioceses have served in the Diocese of Youngstown. These numbers indicate that 2% of the priests who served the diocese were accused of abuse.

We are not aware of any incidents of sexual abuse of children that have occurred in recent years in the Diocese of Youngstown. Of the allegations of past abuse, the most recent occurred 13 years ago. Other claims pre-date that by many years, in some instances as many as 50 years. Given the length of time that has passed, the nature and veracity of some of these allegations cannot be determined.

Of the 19 priests who have had allegations, four are deceased; four left ministry; two left to serve in other dioceses (with full disclosure to the receiving diocese) and are no longer in ministry; seven diocesan and one religious priest are retired; and one allegation was unsubstantiated.

Currently, litigation is pending in three cases. The diocese continues to cooperate with civil authorities and to fund therapy and counseling during pending litigation.

The Diocese of Youngstown, as part of our policy, offers spiritual and/or therapeutic counseling for alleged victims and their families. Between 1950-2003 approximately \$200,000 has been paid for these services; and from 1950-1994 approximately \$300,000 was paid in settlement of claims. These amounts were paid from the diocesan self-insurance fund. Beginning with our 1994 policy it has been diocesan practice not to offer settlements.

Audit & Study

Every diocese in the United States was required to undergo an audit of its child protection program. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops contracted with an independent firm, the Gavin Group, Inc., to conduct the audits. Teams of two auditors spent one

week in each diocese. The results of the audits were released by the USCCB on January 6, 2004.

The audit for the Diocese of Youngstown took place in August, 2003, using a several page audit instrument. The auditors looked closely at our *Child Protection Policy*, reviewed documentation to support the questions of the audit instrument, and interviewed staff members, legal counsel, Review Board members, pastors and others.

We are very pleased to report that the Diocese of Youngstown was found to be in full compliance with the USCCB *Charter and Norms*. Additionally, the diocese received three commendations:

- For the implementation of a far-reaching communications initiative reflecting a high degree of openness and transparency.
- For the progressive development of a sexual abuse program in 1994 that included pastoral outreach and required background evaluations of diocesan personnel.
- For the creation of a review board in 1994 and communicating the identity of board members to the public.

The USCCB also commissioned a study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to try to determine the causes of child sexual abuse. This study required each diocese to complete a survey on each priest who had an allegation made against him, and the victim who made the allegation. The Diocese of Youngstown complied completely with the survey. The national results will be released by the USCCB on February 27, 2004.

The Future

The provisions of the *Child Protection Policy* are an on-going effort to keep our children safe. The policy will be reviewed and revisions made as needed. Education programs will help those involved in ministry to be more aware of policies and procedures.

Healing and reconciliation for victims, their families, and the accused will continue as important steps in restoring trust.

The Diocese of Youngstown will continue to do everything possible to ensure the safety of our children.

Conclusion

The protection of children will continue to be a priority in the days and years to come. Let us all pray for “*the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*,” that they may grow to be loving and faithful members of the Church.

OFFICE OF PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES

Suggested Intercessions for the Month of March

March 7th SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

For healing of all those wounded by abortion: that they might turn to Mary at the foot of the cross and know the consolation of her loving embrace; *We pray to the Lord:*

March 14TH THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

For doctors and nurses who perform abortions: that this Lenten season may inspire within them a burning love for all life, especially the smallest and hardest to see; *We pray to the Lord:*

March 21st FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

For those we have chosen to govern us: that our president, our governor, and our legislators may speak only the truth and preserve the rights of every human being from conception to natural death; *We pray to the Lord:*

March 28th FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

For the youngest of mothers and fathers; that God may teach us to how to love and support them to do the very best thing for their newborn children; *We pray to the Lord:*

Suggested Bulletin Messages for the Month of March

Let us highlight one of the most influential Christian values in the simplicity and poverty of Bethlehem, *that God gave dignity to every human's existence*. He offered to all people the possibility to participate in his same divine life. May this immeasurable gift always find hearts ready to receive it! – Pope John Paul II (Christmas Mass with Roman University Students, 2003)

The responsibility to defend human life in all its stages falls upon all Catholic citizens. It falls, with particular weight, upon Catholic politicians. – Most Rev. Raymond Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis, A Pastoral Letter: on the Dignity of Human Life and Civic Responsibility, November 23, 2003.

As Americans, we are led by the power of our conscience and the history of our country to defend and promote the dignity and rights of all people. Each person, however frail and defenseless, has a place and a purpose in this world. –President George W. Bush, Proclamation of National Sanctity of Human Life Day, January 18, 2004.

Concern for the plight of the poor must be accompanied by a profound respect for the dignity of all human life. Otherwise, it can be corrupted and all too easily embrace procured abortion and euthanasia as acts of compassion toward the suffering. But it is a false compassion, which seeks to lessen human suffering by eliminating those who suffer. When we allow the killing of those most in need, we do not love the poor as Jesus did, who gave his life as a ransom for the many. – Most Rev. Raymond Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis, A Pastoral Letter: on the Dignity of Human Life and Civic Responsibility, November 23, 2003.

Human rights are not a privilege conferred by the government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of his humanity. The right to life does not depend, and must not be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign. – Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, letter to the U.S. Supreme Court on Roe v. Wade decision, February 1994.

Diocesan Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life



For the Weekends of **February 15, February 22, February 29,**
March 7, March 14, March 21:

Suggested Bulletin Announcement

Bishop Thomas Tobin is convening a Diocesan Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated life in order to raise awareness of the responsibility for all in the Diocese to pray and work for Church Vocations, and to suggest specific strategies to promote vocations within the Diocese. Delegates who have been selected from parishes and organizations within the Diocese will gather for the Congress on Saturday, March 27, 2004 at the Maronite Center in Youngstown. The Diocese has provided prayer cards to be used in preparation for this event. Please join our Diocesan Church as we pray for the success of this important endeavor.

Suggested Bulletin Messages

There is an urgent need, especially nowadays, for a more widespread and deeply felt conviction that all the members of the Church, without exception, have the grace and responsibility to look after vocations. (Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, paragraph 41)

The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community, and they should discharge it principally by living full Christian lives. (Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Priestly Training*, par. 2)

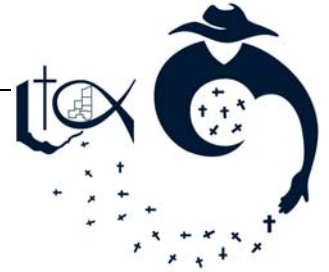
The family...is the first and fundamental setting in which the Christian vocation sprouts, is formed, and is manifested. Just as Jesus' vocation was manifested in the family of Nazareth, so every vocation today is born and manifests itself also in the family. (Pope John Paul II, Address, January 13, 1985)

The history of...every Christian vocation is the history of an inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him. (Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, paragraph 36)

The Church should daily take up Jesus' persuasive and demanding invitation to "pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt. 9:38). Obedient to Christ's command, the Church first of all makes a humble profession of faith: In praying for vocations, conscious of her urgent need of them for her very life and mission, she acknowledges that they are a gift of God and, as such, must be asked for by a ceaseless and trusting prayer of petition. (Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, paragraph 38)

May the Holy Spirit make the entire Church a praying people who raise their voices to the Heavenly Father to implore holy vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life. Let us pray so that those chosen and called by the Lord be faithful and joyful witnesses of the Gospel, to which they have consecrated their existence. (Pope John Paul II, Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations)

Suggested Intercessions in Preparation for the Diocesan Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life



February 15 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

That as a result of the upcoming Diocesan Congress on Vocations we may have an increased awareness of our responsibility to pray and work for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

February 22 Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

For the delegates to the upcoming Diocesan Congress on Vocations, that they be given wisdom to suggest specific strategies to promote vocations in our parish and Diocese. We pray to the Lord...

February 29 First Sunday of Lent

That through the efforts of the upcoming Diocesan Congress on Vocations our Diocese may experience an increase of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. We pray to the Lord...

March 7 Second Sunday of Lent

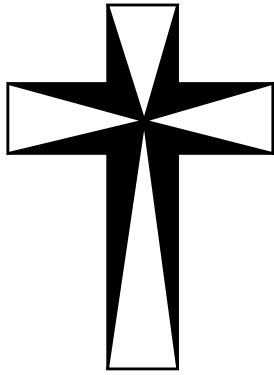
That as a result of the upcoming Diocesan Congress on Vocations environments may be created, especially within the family, whereby our young people will be able to listen and respond to the Lord's call. We pray to the Lord...

March 14 Third Sunday of Lent

For our seminarians, persons in formation, and all those discerning a vocation, that they come to know clearly the Lord's call for them and be given the grace to respond generously. We pray to the Lord...

March 21 Fourth Sunday of Lent

That our Diocesan Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life being held this coming Saturday (March 27) may bear great fruit. We pray to the Lord...



Resources for Discussion and Reflection

prepared by the
Lutheran-Catholic Covenant Commission

Northeastern Ohio Lutheran Synod of the ELCA
and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Youngstown
Lent, 2004

'WEEK ONE'

Dt 26:4-10 Romans 10:8-13 Lk 4:1-13

Lent may hold many meanings for each of us. Some meanings may call us to reflect on our lives and our spiritual journeys. It is, on the one hand, demanding, calling us to give up something so that we may encounter God and know God's plan and purpose for our life. On the other hand, we may be guided to take on something that will help us to experience a higher calling and grow deeper spiritually. There are many temptations in our world that pull us away from 'giving up' and 'taking on' that which would help us live obedient, faithful lives...

1. How does temptation enter your life? What would be helpful for you to 'give up' or 'take on'? Why?

The first reading and Gospel reading reveal a God, who provides for all of our needs. Especially through our baptism we are gifted for all that God would have us do. Jesus was baptized and then led immediately into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2. How does your response to your baptism strengthen you in your wilderness, and give you all you need to confess Jesus as Lord of your life? **Is it possible for you to do what Jesus did whenever you are tempted?**
3. The Devil will keep looking for opportune times in our lives to tempt us and draw us away from serving God. How can your Lenten journey help strengthen your faith and help you to live out your faith in loving, active ways?

LENTEN STUDY QUESTIONS

'WEEK TWO'

Gen 15:5-12 Phil 3:17 to 4:1 Lk 9:28-36

It is easy to follow Jesus when you have a mountain top experience with him, to see who Jesus really is and receive what he has to offer. The disciples wanted to construct three tents so they could cherish the past and stay there, safe and secure. Jesus however was calling them to come down the mountain and walk with him toward the cross. We can hear this same call to us; to find and reflect the brightness of Jesus in our daily routine lives...

1. How do you encounter Jesus with those at your job, at home, at school, when you have a disagreement with someone? How can the lifestyle you lead reflect your journey with Christ to the cross and be a Christian model worth following?
2. Share as a group, the things that your congregation is offering during Lent to learn more about Jesus' way to the cross. How do these opportunities bring you closer to God? (examples: scripture studies, stations of the cross, soup suppers, evening prayer etc... Can you make a commitment to share in one or two of these offerings?

LENTEN STUDY QUESTIONS
WEEK THREE

Ex 3:1-8;13-15 1Cor 10;1-6;10-12 Lk 13:1-9

Our gospel today gives us the parable of the Fig Tree to reflect upon. Jesus sees a fig tree that has been growing for the usual three years. It is now expected to bear fruit. It will be graciously tended for another year. If it then bears no fruit, it will be cut down. God wants us to live a full active life with him. He wants us to participate in his kingdom rather than being a passive bystander. It is not healthy for us to slide by spiritually on minimalism. A branch can be physically dead and still attached to a tree. God wants abundant life for all.

1. When in your life have you experienced a merciful second chance which you may not have deserved?
2. What in your congregation perhaps needs to be cut down (not working), more manure (needing nurturing), or regrafted (needing reconciliation)? Now ask the same question with yourself as the fig tree.

LENTEN STUDY QUESTIONS
WEEK FOUR

Joshua 5:9, 10-12; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-32

Jesus tells three parables in today's gospel. We see a person with 100 sheep who loses one and a woman with ten coins who loses one. In both cases their response is to search diligently for the lost even if it means temporarily leaving the saved. These two stories show an absolute concern for the lost. In the third parable we meet a father who has two sons. The one son leaves his family and his home and becomes as "lost" as a Jewish person can become- he is feeding pigs and longs to eat what they are eating. He "comes to his senses" and decides to go home where he is welcomed and restored as a son.

1. In each of these stories what stands out as a result of the seeking?
2. Have you ever had to search, in some way, like this father and forgive with this much compassion?
3. How is God's forgiveness different from how we forgive ourselves and others?

Jesus acts out these parables of forgiveness when he is nailed hands and feet to a cross. Even then he seeks out the lost and asks the Father to "forgive them for they don't know what they do". Jesus has shown us his Father who will welcome us home in the most costly way through the death of his beloved Son. For Jesus all the parables lead to the cross where justice will be measured out with compassion and love. It is right to call it "Good Friday".

Suggested Stewardship Bulletin Inserts for March/April

March 7, 2004 (2nd Lent)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Peter wanted to build a “booth” for Jesus and just stay on the mountain where His transfiguration took place. But the Son of God, the Chosen One, knew that He must instead keep moving toward His Crucifixion. We, too, must rise from worship and use our time, talents and material goods to hasten the coming of the Kingdom.

March 21, 2004 (4th Lent)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The stewardship message in the parable of the Prodigal Son is that it is never too late to become a good steward. Blessed is the elder brother who had been a good steward all along, but blessed, too, is the prodigal who had to lose all he had in order to understand the value of what he was given.

April 4, 2004 (Palm Sunday)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In the Gospel story of the first Palm Sunday we hear that the owners of the colt had only to be told, “The Master has need of it.” to give the animal gladly. Do I give as readily to the Lord’s work.

April 18, 2004 (2nd Sunday of Easter)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

“Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed,” Jesus says in today’s Gospel. For those who have not seen to believe, however, we must be good stewards of our faith, living it joyfully and sharing it generously. Then, in our time too, “men and women in great numbers” will be “added to the Lord.”

March 14, 2004 (3rd Lent)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The parable in today’s Gospel clearly warns that we, like the fig tree, will be judged by our fruit. While God mercifully provides us with time and opportunity, let us give witness to our faith with deeds of kindness and generosity!

March 28, 2004 (5th Lent)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In today’s second reading, St. Paul says, “For his sake I have forfeited everything; I have accounted all else rubbish so that Christ may be my wealth.” Do I use my gifts in a manner that suggests I feel the same way?

April 11, 2004 (Easter)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In the second reading today, St. Paul reminds the Colossians that they have been raised with Christ, exhorting them to “be intent on the things above rather than on things of earth.” We too, have been raised with Christ. Let us rejoice and be glad!

April 25, 2004 (3rd Sunday of Easter)
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells Peter again and again “If you love Me, feed my sheep.” He says the same to each of us, “If you love Me, use the gifts I have given you to serve your brothers and sisters.”