

2004 Audit Executive Summary

Archdiocese of Atlanta
Archbishop John Francis Donoghue
Previous Audit Conducted 9/29-10/3/2003

The information found herein represents conditions as they were found to exist during the week of November 8-12, 2004.

Findings

To Promote Healing and Reconciliation (Articles 1, 2 and 3)

The Archdiocese has a policy on the prevention of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. The Archdiocese provides outreach designed to offer pastoral care to victims/survivors and their families. The Archbishop or his representative has met with, or offered to meet with all victims/survivors who have reported allegations of abuse since the last compliance audit. The Archbishop or his delegate has directed outreach to all faith communities in which the sexual abuse occurred. The Archdiocese has a mechanism in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor occurred.

The Archdiocese has a victim assistance coordinator, Mary Sue Stubbs who is a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) possessing a Masters Degree in Social Work (MS). She has prior experience interning at a residential treatment center, counseling residents and outpatients on issues of sexual and physical abuse. The Archdiocese established in 1995 a Review Board which consists of six members. The members include a pastor, two attorneys, a family therapist, a former teacher, and a female parent. The Board serves as a confidential consultative body to the Archbishop.

The procedures for making a complaint of abuse are readily available in printed form, and are the subject of periodic public announcements. The Archdiocese has not entered into any confidentiality agreements during the audit period.

To Guarantee Effective Response to Allegations of Abuse of a Minor (Articles 4, 5, 6 and 7)

The Archdiocese would have reported all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor to public authorities however there were none since the last compliance audit. The Archdiocese complies with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities. The Archdiocese has established effective liaison with civil authorities, ensuring that an open dialogue regarding sexual abuse allegations will occur. The Archdiocese cooperates with public authorities about reporting in cases when the person is no longer a minor. In all instances, the Archdiocese advises victims/survivors of their right to report allegations of abuse by a member of the clergy to civil authorities.

When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation, in harmony with canon law, is initiated. If a preliminary investigation so indicates, the Archdiocese notifies the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and applies the precautionary measures mentioned in CIC, canon 1722, or CCEO, canon 1473. When accusations against a priest or a deacon are proven to be unfounded, the Archdiocese takes steps to restore the good name of the priest or deacon.

When sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or a deacon is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the Archdiocesan policies provide that the offending priest or deacon be permanently removed from ministry. The Archdiocese offers professional assistance to offending priests or deacons.

In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for in canon law are observed. Accused clergy are encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the Archdiocese supplies canonical counsel to a priest or deacon.

If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied, the Archdiocese directs the offender to lead a life of prayer and penance. The Archdiocese does not allow the offender to celebrate Mass publicly, to administer the sacraments, or to present himself publicly as a priest.

The Archdiocese has established clear and well-publicized standards of ministerial behavior for priests and deacons. A communications policy is in effect which reflects the Archbishop's pledge to be open and transparent on issues regarding the sexual abuse of children. The Archdiocese does assist and support all parish communities directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors.

To Protect the Faithful in the Future (Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17)

The Archdiocese has implemented a "safe environment" education program. The educational program for children is "You Matter"; the educational program for parents is "You Matter"; the educational program for ministers is "You Matter"; the educational program for educators is "You Matter"; and the educational program for others is "You Matter." Each program is self-generated and tailored to the target group. The Archdiocese has clear and well publicized standards of conduct for persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse. The Archdiocese conducts background evaluations for all Archdiocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors, using appropriate law enforcement resources where permissible. The Archdiocese employs adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination.

The Archdiocese has not transferred any priest or deacon who has had a credible allegation of sexual abuse made against him to another ministerial assignment since the last audit. The Archdiocese has not transferred any priest or deacon who has had a credible allegation of sexual abuse made against him to another diocese for residence since the last audit.

The Archbishop or his designee has coordinated with major superiors of men with a presence in the Archdiocese concerning addressing the issue of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. The Archdiocese has not had the opportunity to participate in research with other institutions in the area of sexual abuse. The Archdiocese has developed a systematic ongoing formation program in keeping with the *Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*.

Compliance with the Provisions of the Charter

At the conclusion of this compliance audit, the Archdiocese was found to be compliant with all articles of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.