



Compliance Audit Report Summary 2003

DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS Compliance Audit Report Summary 2003

The Diocese of Grand Rapids, which was established in 1882, encompasses 11 counties of western Michigan, consists of 90 parishes, one seminary, 43 schools, has 114 diocesan priests and serves a population of 162,670 registered Catholics. The Most Reverend Robert Rose, who was installed as Bishop in 1989 and the Most Reverend Kevin M. Britt, who was named Coadjutor Bishop in 2002, led the Diocese. On Oct. 13, 2003, Bishop Britt became the Diocesan Bishop upon Bishop Rose's retirement. A compliance audit of the Diocese was conducted during the period June 30, 2003-July 3, 2003.

The information set forth below represents conditions as they were found to exist during the week of the audit. Information regarding compliance with the charter will be found in the last paragraph.

"To promote healing and reconciliation"

The Diocese has established an outreach program. The Bishop or his designee has met, or offered to meet, with victims of abuse in the Diocese who have reported the abuse since June of 2002. The Victims Assistance Coordinator is Mr. Edgar Donatelli, who holds an advanced degree in social work. The Diocesan Review Board was established in 2002 and consists of eight members, including one priest and seven respected members of the lay community. The procedures for making a complaint of abuse are readily available in printed form. There have been no confidentiality agreements entered into by the Diocese since June of 2002.

"To guarantee effective response to allegations of abuse of a minor"

The Diocese had established effected liaison with local civil authorities, ensuring that an open dialogue regarding sexual abuse allegations will occur. The Diocese has a procedure in place to advise victims of their right to report allegations of abuse by a member of the clergy to civil authorities. The Diocese has established a clear code of conduct for priest and deacons. The Diocese has a communications policy that reflects the Bishop's pledge to be open and transparent on issues regarding the sexual abuse of children.

"To ensure accountability of procedures"

The Diocese has participated in the research study regarding the "nature and scope" of the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

"To protect the faithful in the future"

The Diocese has selected and implemented the VIRTUS safe environment program,

consisting of presentations to diocesan and parish personnel who have a regular contact with children. The Diocese has created and published standards of conduct for priests and deacons, as well as diocesan employees, volunteer and any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people. The Diocese has procedures for conducting background evaluations for all diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors. The Diocese has not transferred any priest or deacon who has had credible allegation of sexual abuse lodged against him to another ministerial assignment in another diocese. In the one case of a priest who transferred to another diocese for residency purposes, that bishop was notified, and confidentially provided all information relating to allegations of sexual abuse of a child by the priest. The Bishop, or his delegate, and the major superiors have coordinated their respective roles regarding issues of allegation of sexual abuse made against a cleric member of a religious institute. The Diocese has not had an opportunity to cooperate with other churches, religious bodies and institutions of learning in conducting research in the area of the sexual abuse minors. The Diocese has established screening and evaluative techniques in the selection of candidates for ordinations.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER

At the conclusion of this audit, the Diocese of Grand Rapids was found to be compliant with the provisions of the Charter as measures by the process described in chapter 2. Two commendations were issued for the following:

Commendation #1- Regarding the excellence of the outreach program.

Commendation #2- Regarding excellence of communications policy, to include activities such as publishing the identities of Review Board members.