



March 1, 2010

Cardinal Francis George, OMI, President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Ms. Diane Knight, Chair
National Review Board

Your Eminence and Ms. Knight,

The 2009 audit of each participating diocese and eparchy in the United States to determine their compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was again conducted by The Gavin Group, Inc. For various reasons, six of the dioceses and eparchies chose not to participate in the audit process. They were the Diocese of Lincoln in Lincoln, NE; Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg in New York for Armenian Catholics; the Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle-Chaldeans in El Cajon, CA; the Eparchy of Newton for Melkites in Roslindale, MA; the Eparchy of St. Josaphat for Ukrainians in Parma, OH; and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Deliverance-Syriacs in Bayonne, NJ.

The protocol for the 2009 audit process for the dioceses and eparchies was decided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which mandated full on-site audits of one-third of all dioceses/eparchies for the years 2008, 2009, and 2010. The dioceses/eparchies not receiving a full audit would be required to participate in a data collection audit wherein they would provide specific information to an auditor concerning victims/survivors, accused, safe environment training provided and background evaluations conducted. Nineteen of the 73 full audits conducted also incorporated parishes in their diocesan audit, which included a visitation to the parish by the auditor.

To keep the focus of the audits on the protection of the children, the audit forms utilized were modified for the 2009 audit to increase the ease of execution and to ensure that all that should be done for the safety of the children was being accomplished. For 2009, the audits of the dioceses/eparchies again encompassed the time period of July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009. These parameters enhanced the uniformity of the collection, presentation and evaluation of all information provided by the dioceses and eparchies.

Three workshops were conducted during March and April in both Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, CA. Each diocese/eparchy was encouraged to send representatives involved in the implementation of the mandates of the *Charter* to a workshop in order to assist them in their understanding of the manner in which the various documents were to be completed, to ask any questions concerning aspects of the audit and to hear firsthand the expectations of the audit process. A similar training session was conducted for the audi-

tors to ensure that they also understood that the main purpose for the audits was to measure conformity to the *Charter* by the dioceses/eparchies, thus protecting the children, and to respond to those who had been abused.

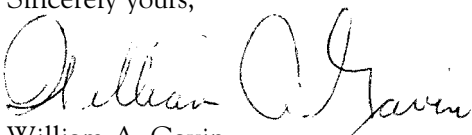
Six dioceses were found to be non-compliant at the end of the audit period, June 30, 2009, and of those, four attained compliance by December 31, 2009. Management letters which offered guidance for performance improvement or highlighted potential problem areas were provided to 22 of the 189 dioceses/eparchies that were recipients of full or data collection audits. Because of the limited information collected from the data collection audits, no assessment regarding compliance was made on the information received for the 2009 audits. It was agreed that if the diocese/eparchy was compliant in their last full on-site audit, that designation would continue to 2009. Dioceses and eparchies that were recipients of full audits received compliance assessments based upon the 2009 audit results.

The information gathered from the 2009 audits demonstrated an expanded commitment on the part of the bishops and eparchs to improve upon an already exceptional dedication toward ensuring the safety of children and young people as well as with the outreach to victims/survivors. The establishment of expanded policies, procedures and protocols has increased the timeliness of addressing complaints of abuse and the timely removal from ministry of those found to have abused. During the past two years, 33 dioceses/eparchies have requested an on-site audit of parishes in order to verify compliance with the *Charter* or to detect shortcomings so that remediation could be implemented. Many dioceses/eparchies have initiated an internal process to audit their own parishes, where historically most child abuse has been detected.

The leaders of the Catholic Church in the United States made a most admirable and necessary decision in 2002 to draft the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The implementation of the Articles of the *Charter* and the courage to have an independent audit of the performance of each diocese and eparchy is a tribute to the openness and transparency of the process developed by the USCCB, and no doubt has been responsible for the identification of abusers and the courage of victims/survivors to come forward.

I wish to express the gratitude of The Gavin Group, Inc., to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and the National Review Board for the opportunity to assist in this most important initiative of the Church. Your actions and efforts have demonstrated a sincere dedication of all involved to assist those who have been victimized, to identify and address those who have made them victims, and to restore the trust and confidence in the U.S. Catholic Church.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William A. Gavin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

William A. Gavin

President

The Gavin Group, Inc.