

2025 Annual Report

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



SECRETARIAT
OF CHILD
AND YOUTH
PROTECTION

NATIONAL
REVIEW BOARD

UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

MAY 2026

Report on the Implementation of the

Charter for the
Protection of Children
and Young People



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Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

SECRETARIAT OF CHILD
AND YOUTH PROTECTION

NATIONAL REVIEW BOARD

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE
OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.



The *2025 Annual Report on the Implementation of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People”* was prepared by the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection for the National Review Board (NRB) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was authorized by the USCCB President, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley. It has been directed for publication by the undersigned.

Rev. Michael J. K. Fuller, S.Th.D.
General Secretary, USCCB

First Printing, May 2026

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The Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
President

Preface

The 2025 *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* presents the latest audit findings in accordance with Article 9 of the *Charter*.

The 2025 Annual Report stands as evidence that the Church not only continues to prevent child sexual abuse and reconcile with past victims but also ensures that audits serve as effective tools for accountability and prevention. The audit process helps us to integrate the safety of our children into the daily life and work of the Church.

By the end of 2025, 100% of the 196 dioceses and eparchies had participated in at least one on-site audit, marking a historic milestone—the first time since the *Charter's* inception that full participation has been achieved. This record of compliance coincided with significant outreach efforts, as dioceses and eparchies provided support services to 150 victim-survivors of abuse and their families who came forward during the 2025 audit period, while continuing to support 1,331 victim-survivors and their families from prior periods.¹

Furthermore, 2,320,143 clergy, staff, and volunteers were background-screened in 2025, while 2,803,250 children and 2,328,545 clergy, staff, and volunteers completed safe environment training.² Although the *Charter* does not mandate the renewal of background checks and safe environment training for clergy, staff, and volunteers, local dioceses and eparchies chose to enforce periodic training updates and background re-screening for the safety of God's children.

The success of this effort speaks to the dedication of everyone involved and reflects a strong commitment to accountability and safeguarding. The unwavering adherence to the *Charter* by all participating dioceses and eparchies is truly noteworthy.

Continued vigilance is essential as sexual abuse often occurs within trusted relationships, and consistent monitoring is vital to prevent harm. The Church is now better equipped to identify risk factors, such as boundary violations, and prevent recurrence. Our established policies and procedures ensure our preparedness to respond to allegations and prevent past failures from repeating.

Such preventive efforts against sexual abuse speaks to the relentless commitment and dedication of the bishops and eparchs of the United States to implement the *Charter*. Our success is documented by the number of allegations received, the safeguarding training and background checks completed, and the number of victim-survivors being accompanied and to whom we continue to minister.

To our brothers and sisters, the victim-survivors: I thank you for your courage to report. The abuse was not your fault. No one had a right to hurt you. Your voice is heard, it is healing for you and others. It is actively reshaping our Church. Please know—you are not alone.

¹ Source, StoneBridge Business Partners 2025 Audit Report, p. 16.

² Source, StoneBridge Business Partners 2025 Audit Report, p. 18-19.

Please review the following 2025 Annual Report, which is comprised of the independent audit by StoneBridge Business Partners, the Progress Report from the Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection, and the survey of Allegations and Costs from Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

I hope and pray that, through collective efforts, we remain vigilant and committed to the work needed to prevent the evil of child sexual abuse—not only in the Church, but in society.

May our “*Promise to Protect and Pledge to Heal*” reach all God’s children.



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

National Review Board
for the Protection of
Children and Young People

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February 10, 2026

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Your Excellency,

For 2025, StoneBridge Business Partners was again charged with conducting an annual audit of each diocese and eparchy to determine compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)* within the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), as required in Article 9 of the *Charter*. Following the audit, the National Review Board (NRB) is charged, under Article 10 of the *Charter*, with reviewing the results and any recommendations therein in the Annual Report prepared by the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection (SCYP).

The NRB recognizes the importance of and fully supports this annual audit process established by the USCCB to ensure continued implementation of the *Charter* in every diocese and eparchy. It is critical that these child protection efforts be regularly evaluated and, if necessary, strengthened by identifying standard best practices, assessing whether *Charter* elements are not being effectively implemented, and noting emerging trends. For example, the 2025 audit year indicates a slight increase in the number of allegations compared to 2024. However, a review of data for five consecutive years shows a decrease of more than 60% compared to 2021 and more than 50% compared to 2022. Through the *Charter*, Bishops in the US encourage the reporting of abuse and have established a system to ensure proper response to allegations. The *Charter* audit is one mechanism for ensuring that safeguarding procedures and practices in each diocese and eparchy are effectively implemented.

The 2025 Charter Audit Report revealed that all 196 dioceses and eparchies have fully participated in at least one full audit process, though not all do so every year. In 2025, 194 of the 196 dioceses and eparchies fully participated in the data collection efforts, representing a strong, continued commitment to protecting our children and young people. This high level of participation is to be commended and should serve as encouragement for 100% participation by each diocese and eparchy in each future audit.

The NRB recognizes the substantial efforts required of each diocese and eparchy to fully participate in the audit process, particularly given the different levels of resources available to do so. The audit again identified personnel turnover as a key factor and challenge regarding *Charter* implementation. As noted previously, this is an area in which succession planning and effective onboarding processes could substantially enhance effective policy implementation. This audit process is especially important as a reminder of the importance of safeguarding and recognition of continued strong efforts by dioceses and eparchies to protect our children and young people. For those participatory efforts, we thank you.

An encouraging sign of overall safeguarding commitment is the fact that seventy-six (76%) percent of the dioceses and eparchies performed parish visits to audit *Charter* compliance at this key implementation level and/or requested Stonebridge Business Partners to do so during the onsite audit of the diocese. This self-evaluation demonstrates an awareness of this critical component and should be encouraged. Similarly, though not specifically required by the *Charter*, the regular renewal of Safety Training (95%) and background checks (96%) demonstrates continued commitment to safeguarding and has been shown to be effective. The NRB supports this practice.

Because the *Charter* does not specify only one approach to implementation of the *Charter's* provisions, each diocese and eparchy is able to adopt processes based on the unique needs and circumstances of the location. In addition to the official audit, an optional mechanism in the form of a Management Letter is available upon request. This letter offers further insight into the findings for individual dioceses and eparchies and provides

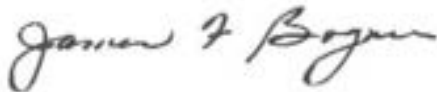
ideas for consideration to improve effectiveness of local protocols. It is especially impressive that more of these letters are being requested by the dioceses and eparchies as an aid to developing more robust practices.

Trends identified and still disconcerting are specific to *Charter* Articles 2, 12, and 13. These were noted in Management Letters issued to more than 10% of diocese and eparchies this year. This should prompt all dioceses and eparchies to regularly assess implementation strategies of these Articles. Particularly with respect to Article 2, this audit found that approximately 27% of the entities audited had deficiencies identified and addressed through a Management Letter.

To assist dioceses and eparchies with issues related to Article 2 and the critical role of review boards, the SCYP has initiated quarterly virtual meetings for local review board members to address questions and clarify the full scope of Review Board duties. This resource also provides an opportunity for networking and sharing of best practices as members strive to provide sound advice to their bishop.

In closing, the NRB notes that the success of safeguarding God's children is reliant on the ability of members of dioceses, eparchies, and every parish, school, and agency to effectively carry out their mission to not only communicate God's love but also to safely evangelize and catechize the young people entrusted to them. The findings of the annual audits should be viewed as an aid to the Church in accomplishing this goal.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James F. Bogner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Jim Bogner
Chairman, National Review Board



09 February 2026

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Mr. James Bogner
Chair, National Review Board

Your Excellency and Mr. Bogner,

I am pleased to present the findings of the *2025 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The completion of this report marks a significant milestone since the creation and implementation of the *Charter*. At the conclusion of the 2025 audit year, all 196 dioceses/eparchies in the United States have actively participated in at least one onsite audit. This achievement is a testament to the dedication, ongoing commitment, and competence of many individuals who work tirelessly to protect the most vulnerable in the Church.

The *Charter* serves as a guidepost for fostering and ensuring safe environments for all God's people. In 2025 alone, almost 3 million children and over 2 million clergy, ordination candidates, volunteers, and educators completed safe environment training. The *Charter* contributes to the ongoing transformation and strengthening of the culture of safety within the Church in the United States.

Such progress is laudable; however, we must never become complacent. The work of safeguarding demands vigilance. Technological advances, particularly the creation and growing use of artificial intelligence, have unleashed new challenges that were previously unthinkable. Moreover, these technological advancements have increased the vulnerability of today's youth, who often spend more time socializing online than in person compared to previous generations.

Yet, while the conditions of our work continue to evolve, the Church's mission to protect, heal, and accompany all God's children remains a core value. Ongoing safe environment trainings for diocesan/eparchial staff and clergy, high-reliability organization trainings (HROs), the administration of the online Child Abuse Prevention Empowerment Program (CAPE), and personalized consultations with individual dioceses and eparchies are just some of the ways the Secretariat on Child and Youth Protection supports bishops and safe environment personnel in the implementation of the Church's safeguarding mission.

The end goal of safeguarding work is not just the protection of children and vulnerable persons, but also the formation and strengthening of a culture of safety within an ecclesial context. This culture of safety is built upon the humble recognition of the dignity of each person as a child made in the image and likeness of God and the respect due to the sacred encounter of hearts, minds, and souls through which Our Lord enters our lives: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Ultimately, the work of safeguarding is a calling and an obligation we all share as members of Christ's body. Each of us, in our own vocation and life circumstances, is uniquely equipped to protect, heal, and accompany others on their journey to encounter the face of Christ.

As we begin preparations for the 25th commemoration of the implementation of the *Charter* in 2027, may our shared history and accomplishments thus far strengthen our faith and serve as a foundation for the sure hope that God's grace will continue to transform His Church into a safe, healthy, and holy family in which all are welcome, honored, and loved.

May He who has begun this good work in us bring it to completion.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bernie", written in black ink.

Deacon Bernie Nojadera
Executive Director



January 26, 2026

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Mr. James Bogner
Chair, National Review Board

Your Excellency and Mr. Bogner,

As we conclude another insightful and valuable year of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)* audit process, we appreciate the ongoing efforts and input from the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection (SCYP) and others involved in the safe environment process.

The audit process remains a key accountability measure designed to ensure the implementation of the *Charter*. Although the *Charter* does not mandate participation in on-site audits, by the end of the 2025 audit year, all 196 dioceses and eparchies will have fully participated in at least one audit process. This represents the first instance since the *Charter's* implementation that every diocese and eparchy has reached this significant milestone. This accomplishment reflects a strong commitment to accountability and safeguarding by all participating dioceses and eparchies, and their dedication to upholding the values of the *Charter* is highly commendable. Over the past year, StoneBridge conducted a total of 61 on-site audit visits, including 36 in-person visits to dioceses and eparchies and 25 visits utilizing remote technologies. A total of 194 dioceses and eparchies participated in the data collection process for the year ended June 30, 2025.

We remain committed to staying responsive to the evolving safe environment needs and practices of the dioceses/eparchies. As part of our ongoing commitment to enhance the audit process, annually, we provide presentations and instruction guides to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). These materials are intended to support Safe Environment Coordinators and other diocesan and eparchial representatives in understanding our audit process and methodologies. These training documents, along with resources from prior years, are available on the USCCB website.

We appreciate the dedication of all personnel who are devoted to implementing and administering the programs and safeguards that are essential to this process. None of this would be possible without the support and prioritization from the bishops who are fulfilling the promise made in creating this *Charter* in 2002.

The annual report that follows compiles the information we gathered during our audits and our related findings and comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Courtney Brock'.

Courtney S. Brock, CPA, CFE
StoneBridge Business Partners



Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY • <http://cara.georgetown.edu>

2300 WISCONSIN AVENUE, NW • SUITE 400 A • WASHINGTON, DC 20007

February 2026

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Mr. James Bogner
Chairman, National Review Board (NRB)

Dear Archbishop Coakley and Mr. Bogner,

In November 2004, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to design and conduct an annual survey of all dioceses and eparchies whose bishops and eparchs are members of the USCCB. The purpose of this survey is to collect information on new allegations of sexual abuse of minors and the clergy against whom these allegations were made. The survey also gathers information on the amount of money dioceses and eparchies have expended as a result of allegations as well as the amount they have paid for child protection efforts. The national level aggregate results from this survey for each calendar year are reported in the *Annual Report on the Implementation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."*

The questionnaire for the *2025 Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs* was designed by CARA in consultation with the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and was only slightly different from the versions used for the 2004 through 2024 *Annual Surveys*. As in previous years, CARA prepared an online version of the survey and provided bishops and eparchs with information about the process for completing it for their diocese or eparchy. In collaboration with the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, major superiors of religious institutes – including brother-only institutes – were also invited to complete a similar survey for their congregations, provinces, or monasteries.

Data collection for 2025 took place between August 2025 and January 2026. CARA received responses from all but five of the 196 dioceses and eparchies of the USCCB and 136 of the 223 member religious institutes of CMSM, for response rates of 97 percent and 61 percent, respectively. CARA then prepared the national level summary tables and graphs of the findings for 2025, which are presented in this *Annual Report*.

We are grateful for the cooperation of the bishops, eparchs, and major superiors and their representatives in completing the survey for 2025.

Sincerely,

Fr. Thomas P. Gaunt, SJ
Executive Director

Phone: 202-687-8080 • Fax: 202-687-8083 • E-mail: CARA@georgetown.edu

PLACING SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AT THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1964

SECTION I

2025



Chapter One

SAFEGUARDING AND A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons represent one of society’s most fundamental responsibilities and a ministry for all members of the Church. When systems are established to protect and ensure appropriate responses in the event of harm, accountability can be measured. The true measure of safeguarding practices lies not merely in their existence but in their consistent, vigilant implementation. This Annual Report serves as both a testament to progress achieved and a clear-eyed examination of the work that remains.

The Charter audit results presented in Chapter 2 and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) survey results in Chapter 3 of this report, reflect a largely positive trajectory in our safeguarding efforts. Compliance with established Church protocols continues to remain high, a testament to the dedication of diocesan and parish staff who are charged with implementing policies and procedures. Likewise, the compassionate dedication of personnel who tend to the needs of those who have been harmed is critical to the mission Our Lord has entrusted to us. These successes deserve recognition and demonstrate that intentional effort and institutional commitment can yield meaningful results in protecting our most vulnerable community members.

However, success in safeguarding and care for the wounded requires more than recognition for a job well done—it requires unwavering vigilance, the kind of vigilance that must be sustained for decades. Annual collection of data for more than twenty years provides a wealth of information that, upon examination, reveals trends and brings to light elements that had not been thoroughly analyzed. CARA has had the foresight to analyze data collected in the Survey of Allegations and Costs from 2004 through 2024. The findings of that analysis illuminate meaningful successes, shifts over time, and significant differences between

demographics. Thoughtful analysis of the *Summary of 20 Years of Data Collected Annually for the CARA Survey of Allegations and Costs for U.S. Catholic Dioceses, Eparchies, and Religious Communities of Men* is a critical tool as we explore effective, innovative ways of caring for all of God’s children.

The Lord is the foundation upon which we build a healthy and holy society. The findings of the annual audits and surveys, along with the 20-year analysis, are integral parts of the framework with which we build stronger, more responsive systems. This framework can become weak and unstable when implementation is inconsistent or perfunctory. History has shown repeatedly that complacency represents one of the gravest threats to safety across many disciplines and industries. Protocols that effectively protect and heal can become hollow gestures if dedication and vigilance are not maintained.

This is why the annual *Charter* audit and CARA survey serve such a vital function and resource. These activities are not designed as punitive measures but rather as essential mechanisms for ensuring that our safeguarding systems function as intended. They also help determine if our systems can adequately adapt to emerging challenges and changing circumstances, such as the recent expansion of artificial intelligence.

Progress made extends far beyond meeting the expectations established in the *Charter*. StoneBridge Business Partners elaborates on the additional actions dioceses and eparchies employ to effectively enhance the safeguarding framework, including renewal of background checks (95%) and renewal of safeguard training for adults (85%). Coordination and collaboration among dioceses and eparchies has improved consistency throughout the Church in the United States while reducing dangerous gaps that can occur when communication falters. These achievements

represent real progress that directly translates to better protection for children and more effective support for those who have experienced harm.

As we acknowledge these successes, we must also examine with clear eyes the gaps that may exist. Strong compliance rates, while encouraging, still mean that some protocols are not being followed one hundred percent of the time. A single overlooked background check can create serious risks. Strong training completion, while commendable, means little if the training content fails to address emerging threats or if knowledge gained is not consistently applied in practice. Strengthened coordination among dioceses and eparchies, while beneficial, does not address the damage that can result from a breakdown in communication or collaboration within a diocese or eparchy. If relationships are not actively maintained and communication does not regularly occur, small cracks can quickly become complex fractures and may lead to critical failures.

In Chapter 2 of this report, StoneBridge Business Partners details three areas of concern that were exhibited in more than 10% of onsite audits. Some dioceses and eparchies continue to experience perceived weaknesses with functions of Review Boards. All are encouraged to evaluate the effective functioning of Review Boards and Board members' knowledge of local policies and Church processes. Resources are available, and the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection is prepared to accommodate the needs of each particular diocese and eparchy. Maintaining current and accurate documentation and database management are also challenges that need to be addressed. While these items may not rise to the level of non-compliance, a single overlooked protocol or momentary lapse in vigilance can mean the difference between a child protected and a child harmed.

The human dimension of safeguarding and victim assistance cannot be overlooked. Those responsible for implementing protocols and responding to harm face demanding, often emotionally taxing work. Burnout, turnover, and compassion fatigue represent real threats in this line of work. Doing this work within the context of the Church can have an even more profound impact on one's faith life. While individual dedication and commitment are essential, they cannot compensate indefinitely for exposure to human failure and spiritual evil experienced frequently and, for some, daily. These are the intangibles that cannot be measured through an audit. Care must be taken to provide the resources and support needed to maintain not only the measurable elements for an audit but also the internal spiritual vulnerabilities that are present for all who love and care for

the Lord. Let not the failings of humanity lead to a loss of faith in God.

Looking forward, the challenge before us is clear: We must build upon these successes while addressing the identified areas in need of improvement. We must maintain the institutional focus, resource commitment, and reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide our efforts. We must continue to ask difficult questions, examine uncomfortable realities, and hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards—not because we have failed, but because the stakes are too high to accept anything less than our best sustained effort.

Next year we will acknowledge a milestone in the life of the Church in the United States. A pivotal event in 2002 was the adoption of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. As we approach the twenty-fifth year of this event, let us recognize it as a moment in the ongoing journey toward ever more effective safeguarding and more profound healing. This Annual Report provides a moment to pause and honestly assess where we stand. Let us continue this journey, and with each step acknowledge the lessons learned and recommit ourselves to the fundamental mission for which Jesus gave His life so that we may live.

ARTICLES 8-11 OF THE CHARTER

Articles 8 through 11 of the *Charter* ensure the accountability of procedures for implementing the *Charter* across the United States, and therefore they are not subject to the audit. General information regarding the implementation of these articles on a national level can be found below.

ARTICLE 8

The *Charter* establishes the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People (CPCYP). The CPCYP is to advise the USCCB with comprehensive planning and recommendations on all matters related to child and youth protection. The CPCYP meets on four occasions each year. There are two additional meetings with the National Review Board (NRB). The following list identifies the bishops, the regions they represented, and consultants with particular expertise:

November 2023 - November 2024

November 2024 - November 2025

Bishops

Bishop Barry C. Knestout, Chair
Term expires in 2026

Bishop Mark O’Connell (I)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop John S. Bonnici (II)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop Larry J. Kulick (III)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop Adam J. Parker (IV)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop John C. Iffert (V)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop David J. Bonnar (VI)
Term expires in 2027

Bishop Jeffrey S. Grob (VII)
Term expires in 2027

Bishop Daniel J. Felton (VIII)
Term expired in 2024

Bishop Joseph G. Hanefeldt (IX)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop David A. Konderla (X)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop Joseph V. Brennan (XI)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop Frank R. Schuster (XII)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger (XIII)
Term expired in 2024

Bishop Barry C. Knestout, Chair
Term expires in 2026

Bishop Mark O’Connell (I)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop John S. Bonnici (II)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop Larry J. Kulick (III)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop Adam J. Parker (IV)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop John C. Iffert (V)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop David J. Bonnar (VI)
Term expires in 2027

Bishop Jeffrey S. Grob (VII)
Term expires in 2027

Bishop Scott E. Bullock (VIII)
Term expires in 2027

Bishop Joseph G. Hanefeldt (IX)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop David A. Konderla (X)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop Joseph V. Brennan (XI)
Term expired in 2025

Bishop Frank R. Schuster (XII)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop James R. Golka (XIII)
Term expires in 2027

Bishop John Nhan Tran (XIV)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop John Nhan Tran (XIV)
Term expires in 2026

Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt (XV)
Term expired in 2024

Bishop Robert M. Pipta (XV)
Term expires in 2027

Consultants

Rev. Paul B.R. Hartmann
Associate General Secretary, USCCB

Rev. Paul B.R. Hartmann
Associate General Secretary, USCCB

Dcn. Steve DeMartino
*Director for Safeguarding Initiatives
Conference of Major Superiors of Men*

Dcn. Steve DeMartino
*Director for Safeguarding Initiatives
Conference of Major Superiors of Men*

Rev. Jorge Torres
*Executive Director
Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life,
and Vocations, USCCB*

Rev. Jorge Torres
*Executive Director
Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life,
and Vocations, USCCB*

Ms. Heather Banis, Ph.D.
*Victims Assistance Ministry Coordinator
Archdiocese of Los Angeles*

Ms. Heather Banis, Ph.D.
*Victims Assistance Ministry Coordinator
Archdiocese of Los Angeles*

Mr. Rod Herrera
*Former Director, Office of the Protection
of Children and Youth
Diocese of Camden*

Mr. Rod Herrera
*Former Director, Office of the Protection
of Children and Youth
Diocese of Camden*

Ms. Chieko Noguchi
*Executive Director, Office of Public
Affairs, USCCB*

Ms. Chieko Noguchi
*Executive Director, Office of Public
Affairs, USCCB*

Ms. Regina Quinn
*Director, Office of Child and
Youth Protection
Diocese of Jefferson City*

Ms. Regina Quinn
*Director, Office of Child and
Youth Protection
Diocese of Jefferson City*

Mr. William Quinn
*General Counsel,
Office of General Counsel, USCCB*

Mr. William Quinn
*General Counsel,
Office of General Counsel, USCCB*

Ms. Siobhan Verbeek
*Director, Office of Canonical Affairs,
USCCB*

Ms. Siobhan Verbeek
*Director, Office of Canonical Affairs,
USCCB*

ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The CPCYP is one of two USCCB committees with representation from all fifteen episcopal regions. The Committee's Chair, Bishop Barry C. Knestout, Bishop of Richmond, began this role in November 2023. Two new members were welcomed in November 2024: Bishop James R. Golka, Bishop of Colorado Springs and Bishop Robert M. Pipta, Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma. Three bishops were elected to serve a second term, Bishop David J. Bonnar, Bishop of Youngstown; Bishop Scott E. Bullock, Bishop of Rapid City; and Archbishop Jeffery S. Grob, Archbishop of Milwaukee.

The CPCYP works closely with the NRB in the pursuit of advanced knowledge and the development of resources related to child abuse and child safety. The CPCYP, with the support of the Administrative Committee, has once again, engaged with John Jay College of Criminal Justice (JJCCJ), to conduct a study of credible allegations received by the Catholic Church that have occurred since 2010. This study will provide information that can be used in the evaluation of current safeguarding practices and procedures. This study will complement the research findings of the Causes and Context Study, also conducted by JJCCJ, which covers the years 1950 to 2010. This type of review and self-evaluation is the embodiment of principles of High Reliability Organizations, which are core concepts SCYP has been encouraging dioceses and eparchies to implement.

An initiative which received approval in late 2024, was the creation of a professional association for diocesan and eparchial staff involved in the safeguarding and healing ministries. The newly formed Catholic Safeguarding Leadership Association will officially launch in Spring of 2026. It will function under the auspice of SCYP. In addition, the CPCYP continues to engage in discussion as the review of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* continues. In collaboration with the Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, the review and revision of the *Diocesan and Eparchial Review Board Resource Booklet* progressed.

ARTICLE 9

The *Charter* specifically created the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection (SCYP) and assigned to it four central tasks:

- To assist each diocese/eparchy in implementing Safe Environment programs designed to ensure necessary safety and security for all children as they participate in church and religious activities.
- To assist in the development of an appropriate compliance audit mechanism to assist bishops and eparchs in adhering to the responsibilities set forth in the *Charter*.
- To prepare a public annual report based on the audit findings. It is to include progress made on *Charter* implementation and compliance of each diocese/eparchy with the provisions of the *Charter*.
- To provide staffing and support for the CPCYP and the National Review Board (NRB).

The SCYP is a resource for the bishops and their staff on matters related to child sexual abuse, safeguard programming, and healing ministries.

SECRETARIAT OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION STAFF

The following staff members served in the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection during the audit period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

Deacon Bernie Nojadera, Executive Director, has served the USCCB since 2011. Formerly, he served as Director of the Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults with the Diocese of San Jose, California, from 2002-2011.

Molly Fara, Associate Director, joined SCYP in 2020. She established the Office of Child and Youth Protection for the Diocese of Joliet in 2012 and served as the director for 8 years.

Silvina Cerezo, Coordinator of Communications and Resources, began working for the USCCB in 2018, in the Department of Migration and Refugee Services and later in the Secretariat of Divine Worship. She joined SCYP in 2023.

Casey Brusnahan, Executive Assistant, joined the staff of the SCYP in 2024. Previously, she served six years in the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

The primary duties of the SCYP include serving as support to the endeavors of the CPCYP and the NRB. The SCYP manages all administrative tasks which enable meetings to run smoothly and ensures that all material necessary for meeting preparation are distributed to members well in advance of the meeting, SCYP also provides orientation for new members so that they are up to date on current agenda items.

This Annual Report, prepared by SCYP, is the culmination of the annual *Charter* Audit, the CARA study, and a summary of activities and events relevant to the USCCB efforts to protect and heal. Through this report the USCCB demonstrates with concrete examples, action taken to protect the young and vulnerable, provide transparency regarding allegations of abuse and the Church's response to hold people accountable, and to offer support and healing to those who have been harmed.

Equally important to the support of CPCYP and the NRB is the support and resources SCYP provides to all bishops and their child and youth protection staff. During the audit year, SCYP has hosted sixteen virtual networking meetings for Safe Environment Coordinators, Victim Assistance Coordinators, and Diocesan and Eparchial Review Board members. On a regular basis, each of these groups has the opportunity to share and gain knowledge, resources, and support. It must not be underestimated, the emotional and spiritual impact that these dedicated people experience throughout their careers. SCYP is available to them for consultation, to identify resources, and develop educational opportunities.

The Catholic Safeguarding Leadership Association (CSLA) was initiated in 2024 as a professional organization specifically designed for diocesan and eparchial Child and Youth Protection staff. Throughout the audit year SCYP guided a dedicated group of CYP staff in the creation of a framework for this association. CSLA will provide for a systematic approach to planning annual conferences for Victim Assistance Coordinators, Safe Environment Coordinators, and Review Board Members. With the use of a dedicated association management platform, CSLA will provide greater opportunities for association members to collaborate and build a more robust support network of safeguarding ministries. This member lead association will officially launch in spring of 2026.

In addition to the official mandates established in the *Charter*, SCYP seeks to collaborate with several offices within the USCCB and external safeguarding stakeholders. Initiatives during the audit year included consultation with the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and translation of their 2024 Annual Report, facilitating working groups for the International Safeguarding Conference hosted in Rome, and research with Migrant and Refugee Services in the development of anti-trafficking education and awareness programs. Dioceses and Eparchies also rely on SCYP to share events and activities that are hosted at the local level and, with the use of technology, are now being shared with colleagues and the general public on a national and global scale. Additionally, SCYP develops and distributes quarterly newsletters to Safe Environment Coordinators and Victim Assistance Coordinators, providing the latest trends, best practices, and training opportunities in the field of safeguarding. Annually, SCYP develops a special edition of resources designed for April National Child Abuse Prevention Month—the [2025 Child Abuse Prevention Month Resource Booklet - 03.31.2025.pdf](#). This resource offers practical tools, educational materials, and guidance to help raise awareness and promote the safety and well-being of children. These resources reflect a shared commitment to creating safe, nurturing environments where every child can grow and thrive.

When invited, the SCYP will visit dioceses and eparchies to speak at large gatherings and conferences such as the Safeguarding Conference hosted by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. On a limited basis and as needed, the staff provides victims/survivors support and guides them to the local Victim Assistance Coordinator who can accompany them through the reporting and healing process. SCYP staff makes efforts to stay current with national and global events as well as advances in the field of child abuse prevention and healing. Relationships with other child serving organizations and professionals are constantly being developed to strengthen the network of resources and within and beyond the Church.

ARTICLE 10

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops established the National Review Board (NRB) during their meeting in June 2002. The NRB is to collaborate and advise the CPCYP on matters pertaining to the protection of youth. The NRB meets four times each year as well as two joint meetings with CPCYP. There are four standing subcommittees: Research and Trends, Audit, Communications,

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and Nominations. Ad hoc committees are established as the need arises. This all-volunteer Board is comprised of thirteen individuals with expertise in fields relevant to the work of the CPCYP. Potential candidates are nominated by their respective bishop/eparch and go through an extensive evaluation process. Finalists are appointed by the USCCB President to serve four-year terms. Members of the National Review Board during the audit period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, were:

Mr. James Bogner, Chair
Term expires 2027

Mr. Aaron Martin
Term expires 2027

Dr. Paulette Adams
Term expires 2028

Mr. José Angel Moreno
Term expires 2026

Ms. Vivian Akel
Term expires 2028

Dr. Julie Hanlon Rubio
Term expired 2025

Dr. Sarah Brennan
Term expires 2026

Dr. John Sheveland
Term expires 2027

Ms. Carol Brinati
Term expires 2027

Mr. Scott Surette
Term expires 2028

Mr. John Leavitt
Term expires 2026

Ms. Barbara Thorp
Term expires 2028

Dr. Kurt Martens
Term expires 2026

ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW BOARD

The CPCYP welcomes the expertise and advice of the NRB. Utilizing a rigorous selection process, nominations are made by bishops/eparchs and final candidates are submitted to the Conference president for appointments to this advisory group. Mr. James Bogner, of the Archdiocese of Omaha, assumed the role of chairman in June 2024. Mr. Scott Surette of the Diocese of Lafayette, IN and Ms. Barbara Thorp of the Archdiocese of Boston, were appointed to new four-year terms, and Ms. Vivian Akel of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn was appointed to a second term.

The NRB provided input to CPCYP as the *Charter* was reviewed. NRB members assisted in refining the suggestions offered by the body of bishops to ensue this influential document remains current and effective.

Mr. James Bogner was one of the opening presenters at the Child and Youth Protection Catholic Leadership Conference

(CYPCLC) in May 2025 and was a panelist for the orientation breakout session. He also participated in the International Safeguarding Conference. Dr. Kurt Martens quickly stepped in to be an impromptu speaker at the CYPCLC, responding to questions about Canon Law and how it applies to the processing of allegations of abuse. The NRB submitted a proposal for events and activities in 2027 to acknowledge 25 years since the adoption of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The dedicated members of the NRB are actively engaged in the identification of new research and studies regarding safeguarding and the advancement of knowledge in understanding the causes of abuse and the societal elements that allow abuse to occur.

ARTICLE 11

In accord with the *Charter*, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, has shared a copy of this Annual Report with the Holy See.

CONCLUSION

The information provided in this Annual Report highlights the activities of the CPCYP, NRB, and SCYP during the 2024-2025 audit year. The *Charter* audit report and the CARA study report provide insight into current *Charter* compliance activities and the status of allegations and costs within the U.S. Catholic Church. Robust participation in the audit process and the CARA study reflects the commitment of dioceses and eparchies to implement strategies that protect and heal. It demonstrates the Bishops' desire for transparency and willingness to open themselves to self-reflection and correction.

True change requires more than compliance requirements. True change occurs when there is a cultural shift and all hearts and faces are turned toward the light of our Lord. We share Pope Leo XIV's conviction: "It is urgent to root in the whole church a culture of prevention that does not tolerate any form of abuse—neither of power or authority, nor abuse of conscience, spiritual or sexual abuse." He explained, "This culture will only be authentic if it is born of active vigilance, of transparent processes and sincere listening to those who have been hurt."¹

¹ Pope Leo XIV, quoted by Franklin Briceño, "Pope Leo XIV Says There Should Be No Tolerance for Abuse of Any Kind in Catholic Church," Associated Press, June 21, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/pope-abuse-peru-leo-sodalitium-clergy-ugaz-7472664cef836f0ee9d2456fd219559a>.

Chapter Two of this Annual Report was authored by StoneBridge Business Partners. Given the independent nature of its charge, the report is reprinted as submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB does not edit or correct the contents of the auditor’s report.

Chapter Two

STONEBRIDGE BUSINESS PARTNERS 2025 AUDIT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This Audit Report summarizes the results of the 2025 *Charter* audits for inclusion in the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection’s Annual Report, in accordance with Article 9 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*.

StoneBridge Business Partners (StoneBridge) was contracted to provide audit services and collect data from the 196 Catholic dioceses and eparchies in the United States on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the USCCB Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, and the National Review Board. Since their initial contract with the USCCB, StoneBridge worked with the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection (SCYP) to develop a comprehensive audit instrument, revise the charts used to collect data, and train StoneBridge staff and diocesan/eparchial personnel on the content, expectations and requirements of the *Charter* audits.

For the 2025 audit year, StoneBridge physically visited 36 dioceses/eparchies and utilized remote technologies to perform 25 additional remote visits to dioceses/eparchies, for a total of 61 on-site audit visits (“on-site audits”) and collected data (“data collection process”) from an additional 133 others. Of the 61 dioceses/eparchies that participated in the on-site audits, there was one finding of non-compliance with certain aspects of the *Charter* involving one location. Compliance with the *Charter* was determined based on implementation efforts from the date of the last audit visit through 2025. On-site audits took place during the months of March through December 2025.

To be found as participating in the data collection process, the dioceses/eparchies only needed to submit Charts A/B and C/D. 194 dioceses/eparchies fully participated in the 2025 data collection process and 2 dioceses did not participate. Data included in Charts A/B and C/D was compiled for information between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INSTANCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

For the 2025 audit period, there was one finding of non-compliance with certain articles of the *Charter* involving one diocese.

The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux was found to be non-compliant with Article 2 due to the Diocesan Review Board not meeting since October 17, 2023. Subsequent to the audit period, the Diocese convened a meeting of the Diocesan Review Board, bringing the Diocese into compliance with Article 2 of the *Charter*.

INSTANCES OF NON-PARTICIPATION

The following dioceses/eparchies did not participate in either the on-site audit or data collection process, thus no information on these locations could be included in this report:

Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma of the Ruthenians (OH)

Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Eparchy in the USA

COMMENTS REGARDING THE AUDIT ENVIRONMENT

Implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was originally promulgated in 2002 and has since undergone revisions in 2005, 2011, and 2018.

The implementation of the *Charter* in 2002 is specific to the United States Conference, as are the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons (Essential Norms)* promulgated June 17, 2005, and put into effect on May 15, 2006. The Preamble to the *Essential Norms* states, the “norms are complementary to the universal law of the Church and are to be interpreted in accordance with that law.” StoneBridge Business Partners monitor the requirements of the *Charter* through two primary methods, the annual data collection and regular on-site audit processes.

StoneBridge Business Partners, as independent auditors of the *Charter*, have observed the implementation of the *Charter* across the United States. According to Norm 2, “Each diocese/eparchy will have a written policy on the sexual abuse of minors by priests and deacons, as well as other church personnel.” The current 196 dioceses and eparchies that make up the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops each implement the *Charter* per their own policies, procedures, and interpretation of the document. Consequently, there are 196 distinct implementations of the *Charter*.

While the *Charter* does not require participation in the on-site audits, as of the completion of the 2025 audit year, all 196 dioceses and eparchies have fully participated in an on-site audit at least once. This marks the first time since the implementation of the *Charter* that every diocese and eparchy has achieved this milestone.

The current audit environment face several challenges, including and most notably, turnover of key individuals and offices. Turnover at any level can disrupt continuity and lead to gaps in knowledge. Differing interpretations of policies or procedures at the local parish/school level can create inconsistencies, further complicating the safe environment monitoring process. StoneBridge has observed dioceses/eparchies working diligently to ensure alignment and compliance within local parishes/schools amid these changes. Addressing these ongoing challenges will require continued

efforts to foster communication and knowledge transfer to mitigate their impact.

COMMENTS ON SELECTIVE AUDIT TOPICS

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS OF DIOCESES AND EPARCHIES

Dioceses and eparchies have taken certain measures that go beyond the specific requirements of the *Charter*. We believe these activities provide for a stronger safe environment and we encourage the continuation of these activities. During the 2025 on-site audits and data collection process we noted the following:

- 79% of on-site audit visits requested an optional management letter from the auditors during the period. These letters provide suggestions to the bishop for their consideration while implementing *Charter* procedures within their diocese/eparchy.
- Approximately 76% of dioceses/eparchies indicated that they perform parish audits in some form, on a regular, or “as needed” basis. It is our observation that chancery offices that maintain regular face-to-face contact with parishes have better results in implementing training and background check procedures than those that do not. StoneBridge continues to suggest to dioceses/eparchies that they consider the feasibility of implementing a formal process to periodically visit parish and school locations in order to review documentation and assess compliance with safe environment requirements. We believe the key element in this process is the development of a relationship that enhances communications between the parish and chancery locations.
- During the 2025 audit year, 24 of the 61 audited dioceses/eparchies elected to have StoneBridge conduct optional parish/school audits as part of their on-site audit visit.
- Approximately 95% of dioceses/eparchies indicated that they require some type of recurring adult training. Although not required by the *Charter*, StoneBridge continues to suggest to dioceses/eparchies that they consider implementing a policy for renewing safe

environment training for all clergy, employees, and volunteers on a periodic basis.

- Approximately 96% of dioceses/eparchies indicated that they require background check renewals. While the *Charter* does not require background check renewals, StoneBridge continues to recommend that dioceses/eparchies consider implementing periodic renewals as a best practice.

LIMITATIONS OF THE AUDIT METHODOLOGY

The following topics represent limitations within both the on-site audit process and the data collection process performed by StoneBridge during the 2025 audits:

Failure to Participate in the Full Audit Process

Participation in the audit process is not required under the *Charter*. As noted previously, every diocese/eparchy has now completed at least one on-site audit since the implementation of the *Charter*. However, it should be noted that two locations did not submit information for data collection during the year. Until all dioceses and eparchies fully participate in both the audit process and data collection, our ability to provide a comprehensive and complete opinion on the full implementation of the *Charter* within the U.S. Conference remains limited.

Hesitation to Participate in Parish Audits

We recognize that parishes and schools are on the front lines of any diocese's or eparchy's *Charter* compliance efforts. To ensure that *Charter*-related policies and procedures are effectively communicated and consistently implemented at the local level, we strongly recommend that dioceses/eparchies conduct regular audits of their parishes and schools. These audits may be carried out by diocesan or eparchial representatives, or by an independent external auditor.

Inconsistent Methods of Collecting and Reporting Compliance Statistics

Each year we attempt to further clarify the instructions for compiling safe environment training and/or background check statistics to be reported on Chart C/D. Some dioceses/

eparchies have developed streamlined methods for requesting and collecting the necessary data to support whether their clergy, employees, and volunteers working with children are appropriately trained and background checked. Other dioceses/eparchies continue to face challenges due to outdated information, limited cooperation at the parish and school levels, multiple databases and inefficient information-gathering processes. As a result, the auditors are furnished incomplete or inaccurate data, which affects the reliability of the information presented in this report.

Resources of Dioceses/Eparchies

We recognize each diocese/eparchy has different levels of resources available to implement the *Charter*. Some dioceses/eparchies still encounter difficulties with outdated or duplicated data, insufficient collaboration at the parish and school levels, and inefficient methods for managing collected information. These challenges have been impacted by turnover in key safe environment positions, which can lead to disruptions in data management and monitoring efforts. Without the ability to directly verify information with the use of annual report submissions from parishes/schools, which can be time consuming, dioceses/eparchies face significant challenges in effectively monitoring implementation and accurately reporting data.

Additionally, due to inconsistencies in reporting and limited available resources, chart submissions are often delayed. StoneBridge has observed a history of incomplete or inaccurate data in the submission of the Charts. For the current audit year, 21% of dioceses and eparchies submitted the Charts past the due date. In our experience, delays in data collection and submission increase the risk of errors and inaccuracies. While StoneBridge reviews the accuracy of submitted information during data collection years, the data from Charts A/B and C/D is not subject to a full audit with each submission until the on-site audit has occurred.

AUDIT FINDINGS BY ARTICLE

The following are observations StoneBridge auditors made during the on-site audit process in the 2025 audit year, categorized by the articles of the *Charter*. In approximately 27% of instances, topics related to Article 2 were noted and included in management letter comments and in approximately 48% of instances, topics related to Articles 12 and 13 were noted and included in management letter comments.

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We believe that proactively and thoroughly addressing each topic by Article will enable dioceses/eparchies to make meaningful improvements and further strengthen safe environments. The specifics of these Articles have been included below for additional reference.

Article 2 of the *Charter* states, “Dioceses/eparchies are to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. Dioceses/eparchies are to have a competent person or persons to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint are to be readily available in printed form and other media in the principal languages in which the liturgy is celebrated in the diocese/eparchy and be the subject of public announcements at least annually.

Dioceses/eparchies are also to have a review board that functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop/eparch. The majority of its members are to be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese/eparchy (see Norm 5 in *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, 2006). This board is to advise the diocesan/eparchial bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric’s suitability for ministry. It is regularly to review diocesan/eparchial policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. Also, the board can review these matters both retrospectively and prospectively and give advice on all aspects of responses in connection with these cases.”

Article 12 of the *Charter* states, “Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain ‘safe environment’ programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for minors, parents, ministers, employees, volunteers, and others about ways to sustain and foster a safe environment for minors. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons with regard to their contact with minors.”

Article 13 of the *Charter* states, “The diocesan/eparchial bishop is to evaluate the background of all incardinated priests and deacons. When a priest or deacon, not incardinated in the diocese/eparchy, is to engage in ministry in the diocese/eparchy, regardless of the length of time, the evaluation of his background may be satisfied through a written attestation of suitability for ministry supplied by his proper ordinary/major superior to the diocese/eparchy. Dioceses/

eparchies are to evaluate the background of all their respective diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include contact with minors. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. Each diocese/eparchy is to determine the application/renewal of background checks according to local practice. In addition, they are to employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (see USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation [Fifth Edition]*, 2006, no. 39 and the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, n.178 j).”

AUDIT FINDINGS SUMMARY BY TOPIC AREA

The following findings are categorized by each specific *Charter* topic area. In total, 162 comments were issued in the 2025 Management Letters. These comments were provided in addition to the valuable discussions held with bishops during the audit exit interview process.

Specific topics observed in greater than 10% of dioceses/eparchies audited during 2025:

Article 2

- Review Board Function - We observed a variety of topics indicating some dysfunction of review boards including lack of meetings, inadequate composition or membership, not following the by-laws of the board, members not confident in their duties, lack of rotation of members, and a lack of review of diocesan/eparchial policies and procedures.

The review board is intended to be a confidential consultative body to assist the bishop. Dioceses/eparchies are encouraged to draw upon the expertise and resources of their review board members to ensure that policies and procedures related to the *Charter* remain effective and pertinent.

Articles 12 and 13

- We noted dioceses/eparchies that were not effectively monitoring compliance with policy requirements for training or background checks for clergy and other persons with contact with minors. Topics noted included a lack of annual certifications from parishes/schools,

turnover of personnel, poor database management, and a lack of visitation to parishes/schools either remotely or in-person to verify proper implementation of the safe environment programs.

Other specific topics observed in less than 10% of dioceses/eparchies audited during 2025:

Article 1

- An offer by the bishop or his representative to meet with victims and their families was not included in policy or not made on a timely basis.

Article 2

- Reporting procedures were not available in printed form in all principal languages in which the liturgy is offered. This potentially limits the ability of non-English speaking populations to report instances of abuse.
- Reporting procedures were not consistently displayed at parishes and schools.

Article 4

- Lack of clear and accessible information on our websites regarding how to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Articles 2 and 6

- The safe environment policies did not include language regarding child pornography or individuals who habitually lack the use of reason per the 2011 *Charter* revision.
- The codes of conduct did not include language regarding child pornography or individuals who habitually lack the use of reason per the 2011 *Charter* revision.
- There was no documentation or confirmation indicating that the safe environment policies and codes of conduct have been read and understood, such as a signature acknowledgement.

Articles 5 and 14

- There was no formal policy or plan in place to monitor the whereabouts or activities of clergy removed from active ministry but not dismissed from the clerical state.

- There were no documented policies regarding one or more of the following items regarding accused clergy: presumption of innocence, retention of civil and canonical counsel, steps to restore good name if allegation is deemed not substantiated, or transfer of clergy.

Article 12

- Safe environment training was not provided to children and youth or there was noted reliance on the public school system to provide the training.
- Article 12 requires dioceses/eparchies to maintain a “safe environment” program which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. This is typically documented through a signed promulgation letter. We observed either outdated letters that were not inclusive of programs in use by parishes and schools, letters from a previous bishop, or no documented promulgation.

Articles 12 and 13

- Some clergy, employees, and volunteers were not trained or background checked, but had contact with minors.

Article 15

- Article 15 requires bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates to meet periodically. We observed that a recently installed bishop had not yet formally met with major superiors.

AUDIT PROCESS

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the on-site audit and data collection process.

Starting with the 2021 audit cycle, the on-site audit period was modified. Previous to 2021, the audit period encompassed a twelve-month period ended June 30. The 2021 on-site process introduced a longer audit period, extending from the most recent calendar quarter-end before fieldwork began to the date of the previous on-site audit visit. For 2025 on-site audits, this is their second cycle of the 3-year audit period. Audits completed during 2025 typically encompassed a three-year audit period from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025.

Prior to the start of the audit year, StoneBridge and the SCYP distribute a variety of presentation materials to all Safe Environment Coordinators and other diocesan/eparchial representatives to educate them on our audit process,

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changes and approach. Training materials and recordings developed by StoneBridge are also available to assist Safe Environment Coordinators and other diocesan/eparchial representatives prepare for the on-site audit.

Whether participating in an on-site audit or the annual data collection process, each diocese and eparchy is asked to complete two documents, Chart A/B and Chart C/D, annually. These Charts are used to collect the information necessary from each diocese/eparchy for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Statistics from Charts A/B and C/D are presented at the end of the StoneBridge 2025 Audit Report.

During the data collection process, StoneBridge reviews both Charts A/B and C/D for completeness and clarifies any ambiguities. At the completion of the data collection process, the bishop or eparch will receive a Participation Letter. This letter communicates that the diocese/eparchy has submitted Chart A/B and Chart C/D. It also indicates the year of the next scheduled on-site audit. Receipt of the Participation Letter does not imply that a diocese or eparchy is compliant with the *Charter*. Compliance with the *Charter* can only be effectively determined by participation in an on-site audit.

On-site audit participants are required to complete the Audit Instrument, which requests the diocese or eparchy to explain and support how they are compliant with each aspect of the *Charter*, by Article. During the audit, StoneBridge verifies Audit Instrument responses through interviews with diocesan/eparchial personnel and review of supporting documentation.

An optional part of the audit process are parish/school audits. While optional, parish/school audits are nonetheless beneficial and an important part of the audit methodology. During parish audits, StoneBridge auditors, sometimes accompanied by diocesan/eparchial personnel, visit a random selection of diocesan/eparchial parishes and schools to assess the effectiveness of the *Charter* implementation.

At the completion of each on-site audit, a Compliance Letter is prepared by the auditors. This letter communicates to bishops and eparchs whether their dioceses/eparchies are found to be in compliance with the *Charter*. Any specific instances of non-compliance, if applicable, would be identified in this communication and expanded upon accordingly.

A Management Letter, which is provided at the request of the bishop or eparch, communicates to the bishop or eparch any suggestions that the auditors wish to make based on their findings during the on-site audit. Any comments made in this letter do not affect compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*; they are simply

suggestions for consideration. Suggestions for improvements are delivered verbally during the on-site audit at the exit interview with the bishop or eparch.

A list of all the dioceses and eparchies that completed on-site audits during 2025 can be found at the end of the StoneBridge 2025 Audit Report.

CONCLUSION

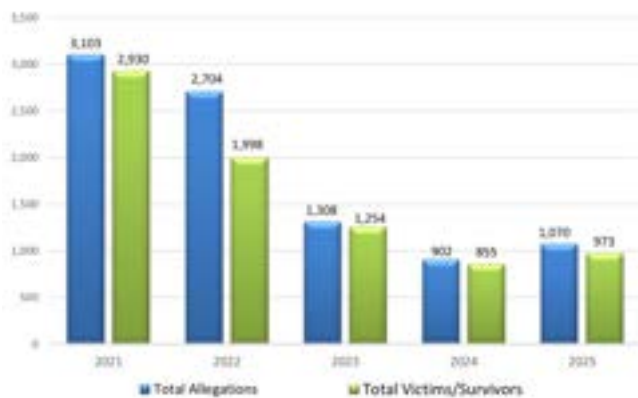
By authorizing and participating in the audit process, the bishops and eparchs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops continue to demonstrate their commitment to protecting children and those habitually lacking the use of reason among us. Prevention is achieved through the dedication and efforts of those responsible for implementing the *Charter*. We recognize the dedication of these individuals and are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with them. Finally, we thank the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, the National Review Board, and the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection for their ongoing support of the audit process.

STATISTICS

TOTAL ALLEGATIONS

Between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, 1,070 allegations were reported by 973 victims/survivors of child sexual abuse by clergy throughout 194 Catholic dioceses and eparchies that reported information. These allegations represent reports of abuse between an alleged victim and an alleged accused, whether the abuse was a single incident or a series of incidents over a period of time. The abuse was alleged to have occurred primarily from the 1950’s to the present. Chart 1-1 below summarizes the total allegations and total victims/survivors by audit year from 2021 through 2025.

Chart 1-1: Total Allegations 2021 - 2025



Allegations received as a result of lawsuits, compensation programs, and bankruptcies, make up approximately 60% of allegations during 2025. These programs allow those who have previously reported allegations, as well as, those who have not yet come forward, to be considered for some type of monetary compensation.

For purposes of this audit, the investigation of an allegation has five potential outcomes. An allegation is “substantiated” when the diocese/eparchy has completed an investigation and the allegation has been deemed credible/true based upon the evidence gathered through the investigation. An allegation is “unsubstantiated” when the diocese/eparchy has completed an investigation and the allegation has been deemed not credible/false based upon the evidence gathered through the investigation. An allegation is “unable to be proven” when the diocese/eparchy was unable to complete the investigation due to lack of information, this is generally

the outcome of an investigation when the accused cleric is deceased, or his status or location is unknown. Since the information collected was as of June 30, 2025, many allegations were still under investigation and categorized as “investigation ongoing.” In other cases, an investigation had not yet begun for various reasons, or the allegation had been referred to another diocese/eparchy or is still in the compensation/bankruptcy process. These were categorized as “Other.” Chart 1-2 below summarizes the status of the 1,070 allegations as of June 30, 2025.

Chart 1-2: Status of Allegations as of June 30, 2025

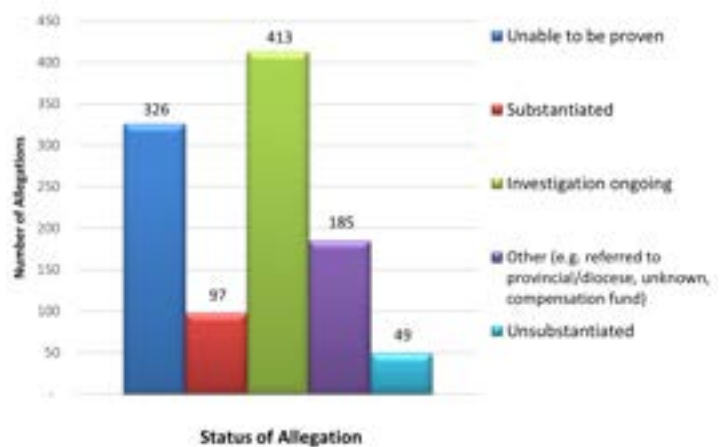
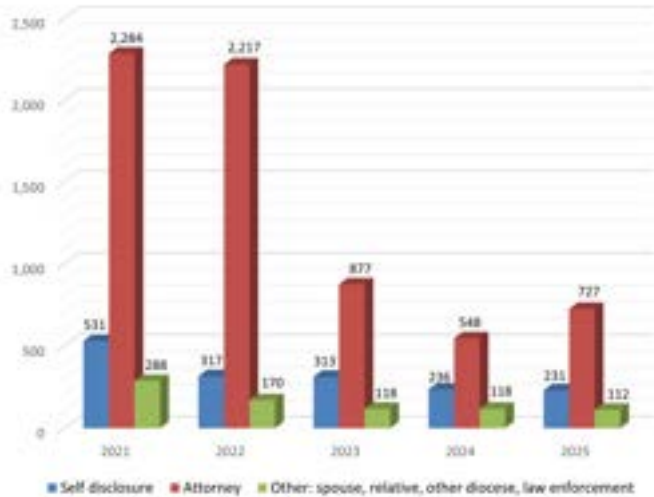


Chart 1-3 below summarizes the ways in which allegations were received from 2021 through 2025. Out of the 1,070 allegations, a total of 727, or 68%, were brought to the attention of the diocesan/eparchial representatives through an attorney, making this the principal reporting method during the 2025 audit period. Allegations made by spouses, relatives, or other representatives such as other dioceses/eparchies, religious orders, clergy members, or law enforcement officials on behalf of the victim/survivor were additional methods of reporting, totaling 112 allegations. The remaining 231 allegations were made by self-disclosure.

Chart 1-3: Methods of Reporting Allegations 2021 - 2025



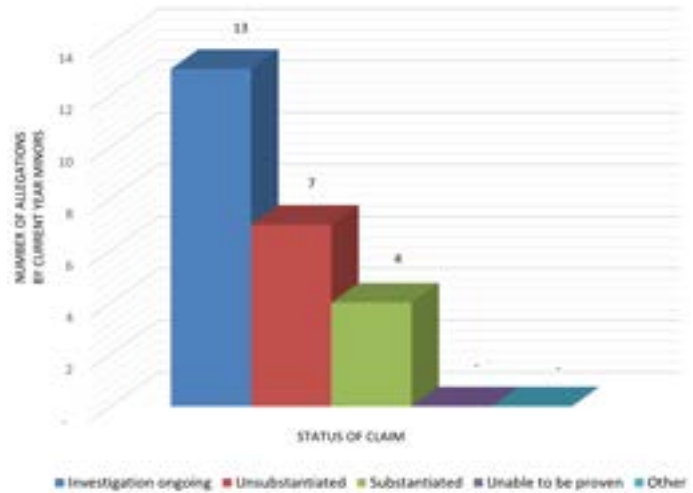
During the current audit period, dioceses/eparchies provided outreach and support services to 150 victims/survivors and their families who reported during this audit period. Continued support was provided to 1,331 victims/survivors and their families who reported abuse in prior audit periods.

As part of the audit procedures, StoneBridge asked dioceses and eparchies to report on Chart A/B the date the abuse was reported, and the date outreach services were offered. StoneBridge compared these dates to determine how promptly outreach services were offered to victims/survivors from the dioceses and eparchies as further discussed in Article 1.

Allegations involving Minors

Out of the 1,070 allegations, 24 involved current year minors—consisting of 6 males, 17 females and 1 unidentified. Of these allegations 4 were substantiated, 13 were categorized as investigation ongoing, and 7 were unsubstantiated. Chart 4-1 below summarizes the status of each of the 24 claims made by current year minors as of June 30, 2025.

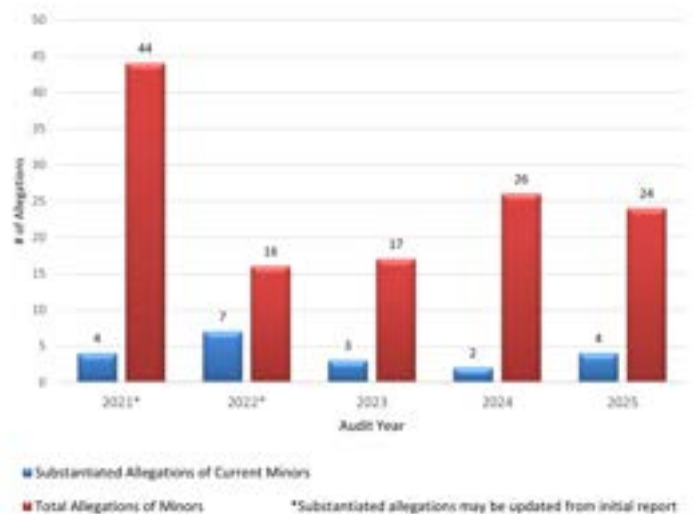
Chart 4-1: Status of Claims by Current Year Minors as of June 30, 2025



Revisions to the *Charter* in 2011 included classification of allegations to expand to those who “habitually lack the use of reason” and the acquisition, possession, and distribution of child pornography. There was 1 allegation involving an adult who “habitually lacks the use of reason” and 3 allegations involving child pornography.

Part of StoneBridge’s audit procedures is to follow up with the prior years’ allegations that involved minors where the investigation was identified as ongoing. Chart 4-2 below compares the total number of allegations by minors with substantiated claims by minors over the last five years.

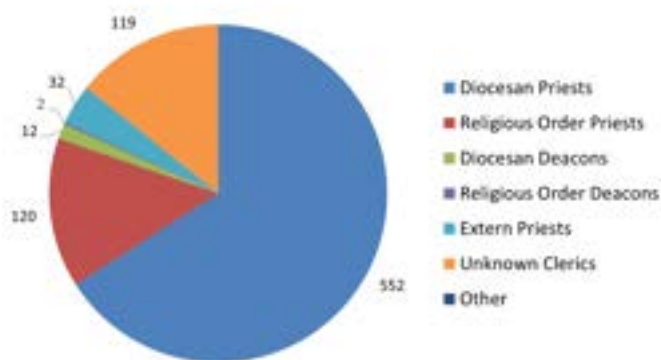
Chart 4-2: Total Allegations of Minors vs. Substantiated Allegations 2021 - 2025



Accused Clerics

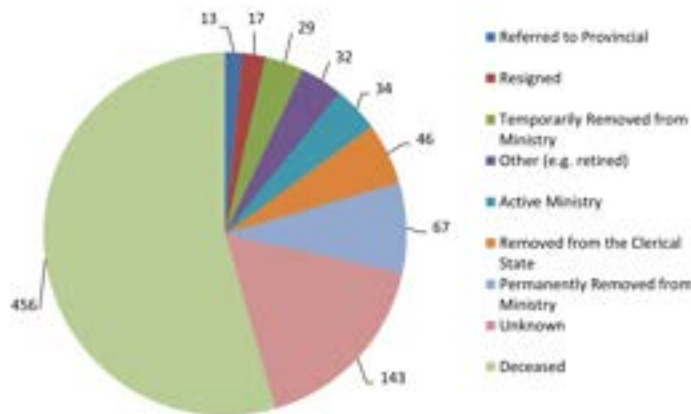
The number of clerics accused of sexual abuse of a minor during the audit period totaled 837. The accused clerics were categorized as priests, deacons, unknown, or other. An “unknown” cleric is used for a situation in which the victim/survivor was unable to provide the identity of the accused. “Other” represents a cleric from another diocese for which details of ordination and/or incardination were not available/provided. Accused priests of the audit period totaled 704. Of this total, 552 were diocesan priests, 120 belonged to a religious order, and 32 were incardinated elsewhere. There were 14 deacons accused during the audit period. Of this total, 12 were diocesan deacons, and 2 were religious order deacons. Allegations brought against “unknown” clerics totaled 119. Of the total identified clerics, 378, or 45%, had been accused in previous audit periods. See Chart 4-3 below for summary of accused type.

Chart 4-3: Accused Type for June 30, 2025



See Chart 5-1 below for a summary of the status of the 837 accused clerics as of June 30, 2025.

Chart 5-1: Status of Accused Clerics for June 30, 2025



Training and Background Check Statistics

StoneBridge collected current year safe environment training and background screening information for each diocese/eparchy. The figures provided by dioceses/eparchies for Article 12 were not audited by StoneBridge. The *Charter* does not require clergy, employees, and volunteers to renew safe environment training or background check information. However, some dioceses/eparchies choose to require some form of refresher training and background check renewal. A complete list of safe environment training programs used in dioceses and eparchies can be found on the SCYP website. It is important to note that the figures reported in the categories below, excluding the children category, represent individuals who have been trained and background screened at least once.

2025 Annual Report: Findings and Recommendations

TRAINING

Children	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Dioceses/eparchies participating	194	195	196	194	191	195	194	194
Total children	3,147,148	3,232,865	3,185,779	3,073,741	2,960,677	3,661,972	4,008,467	4,209,857
Total children trained	2,803,250	2,851,850	2,812,688	2,929,581	2,466,346	3,100,151	3,685,276	3,914,972
Percent trained	89.1%	88.2%	88.3%	95.3%	83.3%	84.7%	91.9%	93.0%
Percent opted out	1.3%	2.7%	1.7%	1.2%	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%

Priests	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total priests	31,260	31,624	31,493	31,846	32,264	33,469	33,628	33,814
Total priests trained	31,180	31,528	31,355	31,674	32,101	32,600	33,244	33,542
Percent trained	99.7%	99.7%	99.6%	99.5%	99.5%	97.4%	98.9%	99.2%

Deacons	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total deacons	16,558	16,552	16,494	16,790	16,592	16,457	16,344	16,414
Total deacons trained	16,526	16,512	16,443	16,769	16,559	16,391	16,204	16,318
Percent trained	99.8%	99.8%	99.7%	99.9%	99.8%	99.6%	99.1%	99.4%

Candidates for Ordination	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total candidates	5,503	5,396	5,219	5,529	5,547	6,662	6,564	6,787
Total candidates trained	5,479	5,375	5,202	5,474	5,509	6,617	6,482	6,677
Percent trained	99.6%	99.6%	99.7%	99.0%	99.3%	99.3%	98.8%	98.4%

Educators	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total educators	148,697	146,689	154,284	152,078	155,209	164,279	173,236	175,151
Total educators trained	147,902	145,751	152,571	150,818	154,093	163,112	170,611	173,611
Percent trained	99.5%	99.4%	98.9%	99.2%	99.3%	99.3%	98.5%	99.1%

Other Employees	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total other employees	263,982	268,143	256,170	254,623	251,293	256,538	273,156	267,052
Total other employees trained	260,358	262,397	252,816	250,155	247,198	250,480	264,847	261,215
Percent trained	98.6%	97.9%	98.7%	98.2%	98.4%	97.6%	97.0%	97.8%

Volunteer	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total volunteers	1,896,692	1,818,763	1,721,445	1,731,351	1,608,976	2,107,964	2,218,853	2,205,252
Total volunteers trained	1,867,100	1,795,233	1,697,030	1,694,604	1,581,808	2,069,213	2,136,439	2,163,099
Percent trained	98.4%	98.7%	98.6%	97.9%	98.3%	98.2%	96.3%	98.1%

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Priests	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Dioceses/eparchies participating	194	195	196	194	191	195	194	194
Total priests	31,260	31,624	31,493	31,846	32,264	33,469	33,628	33,814
Total priests background checked	31,209	31,517	31,413	31,754	31,824	32,923	33,195	33,592
Percent checked	99.8%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%	98.6%	98.4%	98.7%	99.3%

Deacons	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total deacons	16,558	16,552	16,494	16,790	16,592	16,457	16,344	16,414
Total deacons background checked	16,476	16,461	16,465	16,770	16,486	16,417	16,320	16,389
Percent checked	99.5%	99.5%	99.8%	99.9%	99.4%	99.8%	99.9%	99.8%

Candidates for Ordination	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total candidates	5,503	5,396	5,219	5,529	5,547	6,662	6,564	6,787
Total candidates background checked	5,494	5,372	5,207	5,498	5,505	6,634	6,506	6,711
Percent checked	99.8%	99.6%	99.8%	99.4%	99.2%	99.6%	99.1%	98.9%

Educators	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total educators	148,697	146,689	154,284	152,078	155,209	164,279	173,236	175,151
Total educators background checked	147,853	145,387	153,074	151,188	152,223	163,442	170,163	173,706
Percent checked	99.4%	99.1%	99.2%	99.4%	98.1%	99.5%	98.2%	99.2%

Other Employees	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total other employees	263,982	268,143	256,170	254,623	251,293	256,538	273,156	267,052
Total other employees background checked	261,318	264,281	252,712	251,308	240,253	254,766	268,417	263,915
Percent checked	99.0%	98.6%	98.7%	98.7%	95.6%	99.3%	98.3%	98.8%

Volunteers	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total volunteers	1,896,692	1,818,763	1,721,445	1,731,351	1,608,976	2,107,964	2,218,853	2,205,252
Total volunteers background checked	1,857,793	1,774,888	1,686,848	1,687,643	1,518,365	2,083,752	2,156,234	2,163,670
Percent checked	97.9%	97.6%	98.0%	97.5%	94.4%	98.9%	97.2%	98.1%

ON-SITE AUDITS PERFORMED BY STONEBRIDGE DURING 2025

- Diocese of Alexandria, LA
- Diocese of Beaumont, TX
- Diocese of Birmingham, AL
- Diocese of Brooklyn, NY
- Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle, CA
- Diocese of Cleveland, OH
- Diocese of Columbus, OH
- Diocese of Des Moines, IA
- Archdiocese of Dubuque, IA
- Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles, CA
- Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn, NY
- Diocese of Erie, PA
- Diocese of Fall River, MA
- Diocese of Fargo, ND
- Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, IN
- Diocese of Gallup, NM
- Diocese of Gary, IN
- Diocese of Grand Rapids, MI
- Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, MT
- Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, LA
- Diocese of Jackson, MS
- Diocese of Kalamazoo, MI
- Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO
- Diocese of Knoxville, TN
- Diocese of Lafayette, IN
- Archdiocese of Las Vegas, NV
- Diocese of Lexington, KY
- Diocese of Lubbock, TX
- Diocese of Madison, WI
- Diocese of Marquette, MI
- Archdiocese of Miami, FL
- Archdiocese of Military Services, DC
- Archdiocese of Mobile, AL
- Archdiocese of New Orleans, LA
- Archdiocese of New York, NY
- Diocese of Oakland, CA
- Diocese of Palm Beach, FL
- Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, FL
- Diocese of Peoria, IL
- Archdiocese of Portland, OR
- Diocese of Providence, RI
- Diocese of Pueblo, CO
- Diocese of Rapid City, SD
- Diocese of Rockford, IL
- Romanian Catholic Diocese Eparchy of St. George in Canton, OH
- Archdiocese of San Antonio, TX
- Diocese of San Diego, CA
- Diocese of San Jose, CA
- Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, MO
- Diocese of St. Cloud, MN
- Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO
- Diocese of Tulsa, OK
- Diocese of Tyler, TX
- Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, PA
- Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma, OH
- Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford, CT
- Diocese of Victoria, TX
- Archdiocese of Washington, DC
- Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, WV
- Diocese of Wichita, KS
- Diocese of Yakima, WA

ON-SITE AUDITS INVOLVING STONEBRIDGE PARISH/ SCHOOL VISITS DURING 2025

- Diocese of Beaumont, TX
- Diocese of Erie, PA
- Diocese of Fall River, MA
- Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, IN
- Diocese of Gary, IN
- Diocese of Grand Rapids, MI
- Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, MT
- Diocese of Kalamazoo, MI
- Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO
- Diocese of Lafayette, IN
- Archdiocese of Las Vegas, NV
- Archdiocese of New Orleans, LA
- Archdiocese of New York, NY
- Diocese of Palm Beach, FL
- Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, FL
- Archdiocese of Portland, OR
- Diocese of Pueblo, CO
- Diocese of Rockford, IL
- Diocese of St. Cloud, MN
- Diocese of Tulsa, OK
- Diocese of Victoria, TX
- Archdiocese of Washington, DC
- Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, WV
- Diocese of Yakima, WA

SECTION II

2025



Chapter Three of this Annual Report was authored by Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. Given the independent nature of its charge, the report is reprinted as submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB does not edit or correct the contents of the auditor's report.

Chapter Three

2025 SURVEY OF ALLEGATIONS AND COSTS

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE SECRETARIAT OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

FEBRUARY 2026, JONATHON L. WIGGINS, Ph.D., ALI MUMBACH, M.A.,
MARK M. GRAY, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

At their Fall Plenary Assembly in November 2004, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to design and conduct an annual survey of all the dioceses and eparchies whose diocesan or eparchial bishops are members of the USCCB. The purpose of this survey is to collect information on new allegations of sexual abuse of minors and the clergy against whom these allegations were made. The survey also gathers information on the amount of money dioceses and eparchies have expended as a result of allegations as well as the amount they have paid for child protection efforts. The national level aggregate results from this survey for each calendar year are prepared for the USCCB and reported in its *Annual Report on the Implementation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."* A complete set of the aggregate results for ten years (2004 to 2013) is available on the USCCB website.

Beginning in 2014, the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection changed the reporting period for this survey to coincide with the July 1-June 30 reporting period that is used by dioceses and eparchies for their annual audits. Since that

time, the annual survey of allegations and costs captures all allegations reported to dioceses and eparchies between July 1 and June 30. This year's survey, the 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs, covers the period between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Where appropriate, this report presents data in tables for audit year 2025 compared to audit year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), 2023 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023), 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022), 2021 (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021), 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020), 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019), 2018 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018), 2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017), 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016), 2015 (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015), and 2014 (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014).¹

The questionnaire for the *2025 Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs* for dioceses and eparchies was designed by CARA in consultation with the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. While the versions of the questionnaire used from 2004 to 2019 were nearly identical, this is the sixth survey year with revised questions concerning the details of the allegations (but the questions about the alleged perpetrators and the costs remain the same). In 2014 to 2019, details

¹ Before 2014, this survey was collected on a calendar year basis. For discussion of previous trends in the data, refer to the 2013 Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs as reported in the *2013 Annual Report on the Implementation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,"* published by the USCCB Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection.

about the allegations and the alleged perpetrators were only gathered about the credible allegations that were both reported and classified as credible in that fiscal year. This and the past five year's surveys, on the other hand, collect those details about those allegations and alleged perpetrators that were deemed credible during a relevant fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) regardless of when they were first reported to the arch/diocese, eparchy, or religious community. Where equivalent, comparisons are made to the previous year's data. Where the data is not equivalent, no comparisons are made.

In consultation with the USCCB and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), this year's survey continues to include a change in the categories used to group allegations made on 2022's survey. In the previous versions of the surveys, the five categories were: credible, unsubstantiated, obviously false, unable to be proven, and investigation ongoing. The 2022 surveys were altered so the categories better complemented those used in the audits that dioceses and eparchies participate in each year: credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, and investigation ongoing. The definitions of each of these categories can be seen in Appendices I and II of this report (questions A1 to A4 and 2 to 5).

As in previous years, CARA prepared an online version of the survey and hosted it on the CARA website. Bishops and eparchs received information about the process for completing the survey in their mid-August correspondence from the USCCB and were asked to provide the name of the contact person who would complete the survey. CMSM also invited major superiors of religious communities of men to complete a similar survey for their congregations, provinces, and monasteries. Religious communities of brothers also participated in the survey of men's communities, as they have since 2015. This year's questionnaire was the eighth to have alterations in sections of the survey for religious communities to measure the diagnoses of the alleged offenders. In addition, this is the third year questions were added about accreditation by Praesidium and religious communities that have members who are themselves survivors of minor sexual abuse.

CARA completed data collection for the fiscal year 2025 annual survey in January 2026. All but five of the 196 dioceses and eparchies of the USCCB completed the survey, for a response rate of 97 percent. A total of 136 of the 223 religious communities that belong to CMSM for which CARA had contact information responded to the survey, for a response rate of 61 percent. The overall response rate for dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities was 78 percent, less than the overall response rate of 81 percent for this survey last year. Once CARA had received all data, it then

prepared the national level summary tables and graphs of the findings for the period from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

DIOCESES AND EPARCHIES

The Data Collection Process

CARA and the Secretariat contacted every diocese or eparchy that had not sent in a contact name by late September 2025 to obtain the name of a contact person to complete the survey. Dioceses and eparchies began submitting their data for the 2025 survey in October 2025. CARA and the Secretariat sent multiple reminders by email and telephone to these contact persons, to encourage a high response rate.

By January 2026, all but five of the 196 dioceses and eparchies of the USCCB had responded to the survey, for a response rate of 97 percent.² The participation rate among dioceses and eparchies has been high each year of this survey. Beginning in 2004 and 2005 with response rates of 93 and 94 percent, respectively, the response reached 99 percent each year from 2006 to 2014, was 100 percent for 2015 and 2016, and was 99 percent for 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

A copy of the survey instrument for dioceses and eparchies is included in this report in Appendix I.

Credible Allegations Received by Dioceses and Eparchies

As is shown in Table 1, the responding dioceses and eparchies reported that between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, they deemed 117 allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by a diocesan or eparchial priest or deacon to be credible.³ These allegations were made by 117 individuals against 89 priests or deacons. Of the 117 allegations deemed credible during this reporting period (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025),

² Three dioceses and two eparchies indicated they did not complete the 2025 survey due to bankruptcy, legal proceedings, or the reorganization of their eparchy: the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma (Ohio), the Diocese of Burlington (Vermont), the Diocese of Charleston (South Carolina), the Dioceses of Rockville Centre (New York), and the Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Newton (Massachusetts).

³ As was mentioned in the Introduction, the 2020 survey was the first to collect details about all allegations that were deemed credible during that past fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) regardless of when they were first reported to the arch/diocese, eparchy, or religious community. Thus, comparisons in this subsection are only shown for the six surveys using the same criteria for credible allegations. Previous year's numbers can be viewed in the 2019 report available on the USCCB website at https://cdn.ymaws.com/usccb.site-ym.com/resource/group/1560f0d7-fee7-4aff-afd2-4cf076a24943/resource_toolbox/audit/2019_annual_report_final.pdf e7-4aff-afd2-4cf076a24943/resource_toolbox/audit/2019_annual_report_final.pdf

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three allegations may have involved children under the age of 18, that is the abuse occurred in the past 18 years. All of the other allegations were made by adults who are alleging abuse when they were minors.

Table 1. New Allegations Deemed Credible in FY 2025: Dioceses and Eparchies

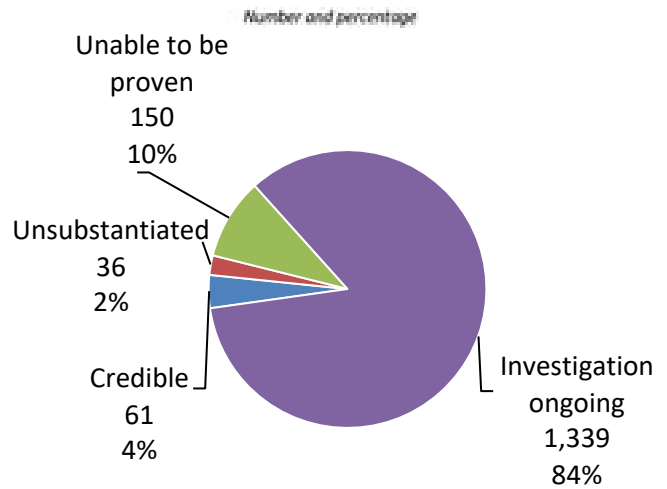
	Victims	Allegations	Offenders
FY 2025	117	117	89
FY 2024	121	122	97
FY 2023	229	229	144
FY 2022	237	245	211
FY 2021	967	968	569
FY 2020	1,529	1,539	1,115

Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2020-2025

Determination of Credibility for Allegations First Received in Previous Fiscal Years

Each diocese and eparchy follows a process to determine the credibility of any allegation of clergy sexual abuse, as set forth in canon law and the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Dioceses and eparchies were asked to categorize these new allegations into one of these categories: credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, and investigation ongoing.⁴ Figure 1 shows those allegations first received before July 1, 2024. More than four-fifths of the previously received 1,586 allegations were categorized as investigation ongoing (84 percent), one-tenth was unable to be proven (10 percent), and a little more than one in 20 was found to be credible (4 percent) or unsubstantiated (2 percent).

Figure 1. Resolution in Fiscal Year 2025 of Allegations First Received before July 1, 2024: Dioceses and Eparchies



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

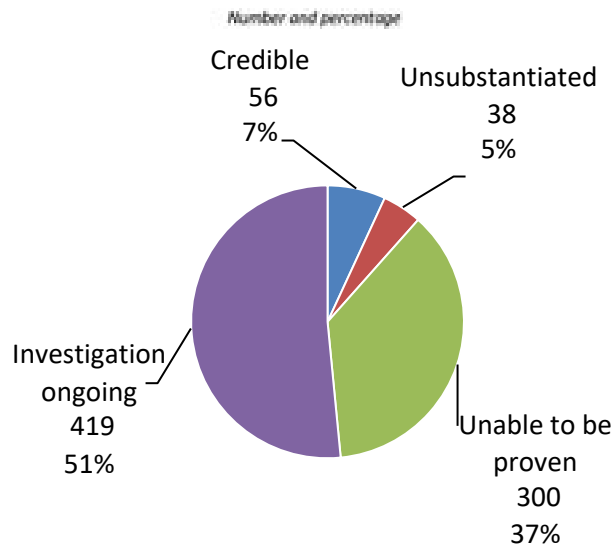
The percentages for this year differ from those of fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), where 60 percent of the allegations were categorized as investigation ongoing, 37 percent as unable to be proven, 2 percent as credible, and 1 percent as unsubstantiated.

Determination of Credibility for Allegations First Received in This Fiscal Year

Figure 2 presents the outcome for 813 allegations first received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Dioceses and eparchies were again asked to categorize these new allegations into one of these categories: credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, and investigation ongoing. As can be seen below, one-half of new allegations received in fiscal year 2025 requires more investigation before they can be classified (51 percent). Among those classified, almost two-fifths are unable to be proven (37 percent) and roughly one in 20 was designated credible (7 percent) or as unsubstantiated (5 percent).

⁴ The definitions of these terms are presented on the survey in Appendix I.

Figure 2. Determination of Credibility for New Allegations First Received in Fiscal Year 2025: Dioceses and Eparchies



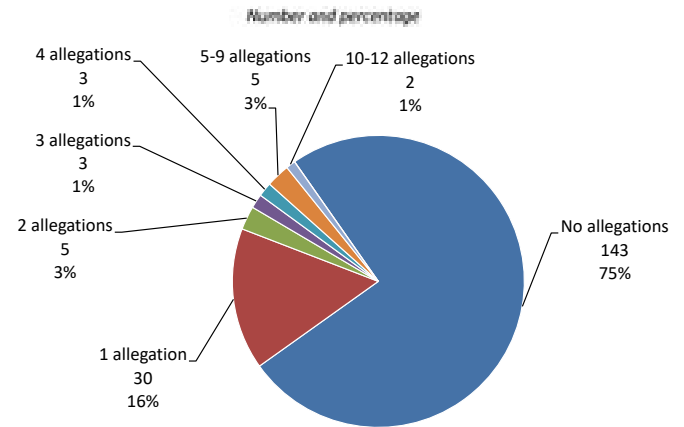
Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

The proportions above differ from those for fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), where 26 percent were categorized as investigation ongoing, 62 percent as unable to be proven, 7 percent as credible, and 5 percent as unsubstantiated.

The remainder of this subsection of the report for dioceses and eparchies details the 117 allegations that have been deemed as credible during this fiscal year, both those first received in a previous fiscal year (the 61 credible allegations shown in Figure 1) and those first received during this fiscal year (the 56 credible allegations shown in Figure 2).

To view how many dioceses and eparchies had zero credible allegations, how many had a few, and how many had multiple allegations, Figure 3 displays the submissions this year for the 191 responding dioceses and eparchies. Three in four dioceses and eparchies had zero credible allegations (75 percent) this year, 16 percent had one, and 3 percent had two. On the other end of the scale, two dioceses or eparchies had more than ten allegations (less than 1 percent).

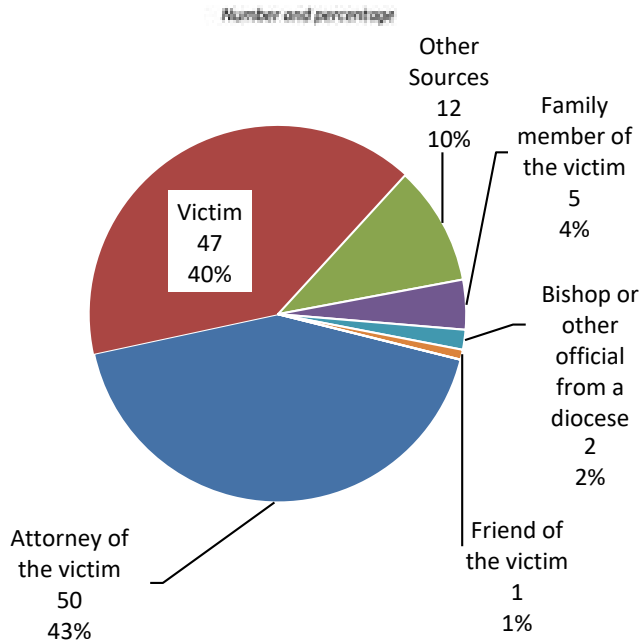
Figure 3. Summary of the Number of Credible Allegations Reported in 2025: Dioceses and Eparchies



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Figure 4 illustrates the way in which these 117 allegations of abuse that were deemed credible between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 were first reported to the dioceses or eparchies. A little more than two in five new allegations were first reported by an attorney of the victim (43 percent), two-fifths by a victim (40 percent), and about one in 20 by a family member of the victim (4 percent). One or two percent each was first reported by a friend of the victim (1 percent), or by a bishop or other official from a diocese (2 percent). Ten percent were reported by an “other” source, such as a parish employee, a school employee, or someone anonymous.

Figure 4. Sources for How Allegations of Abuse Were First Reported: Dioceses and Eparchies

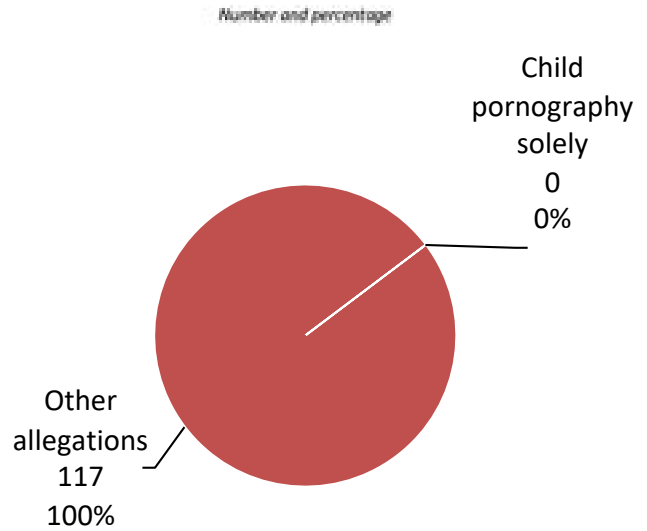


Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Compared to report year 2024, fewer allegations this fiscal year were reported by an attorney (43 percent in fiscal year 2025 compared to 52 percent in fiscal year 2024) and more were reported by other sources (10 percent in 2025 compared to 2 percent in 2024).

Figure 5 presents the percentage of all allegations of abuse that were cases solely involving child pornography. None of the 117 total allegations deemed credible from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 solely involved child pornography.

Figure 5. Percentage of Allegations Solely Involving Child Pornography: Dioceses and Eparchies



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

In the previous fiscal year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), one allegation solely involved child pornography.

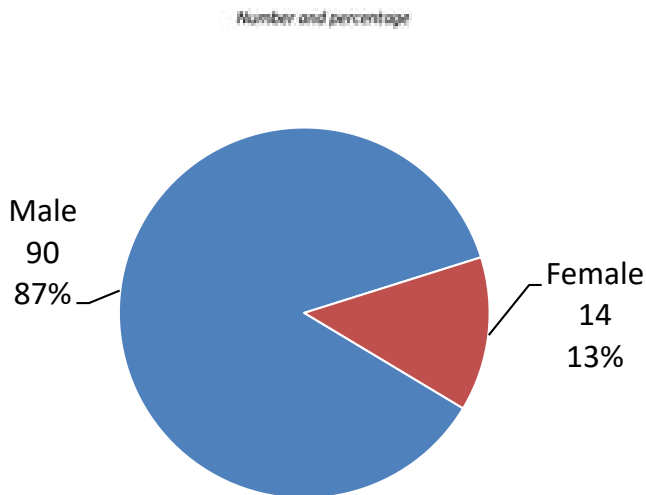
From here forward in this subsection, the 117 victims of allegations that did not solely involve child pornography are described and detailed.

Victims, Offenses, and Offenders

As illustrated in Figure 6, among the 104 victims⁵ where their gender was known, nearly nine-tenths were male (87 percent), and more than one-tenth female (13 percent).

⁵ Thirteen of the 117 alleged victims were of an unknown gender (11 percent).

Figure 6. Gender of Abuse Victim: Dioceses and Eparchies

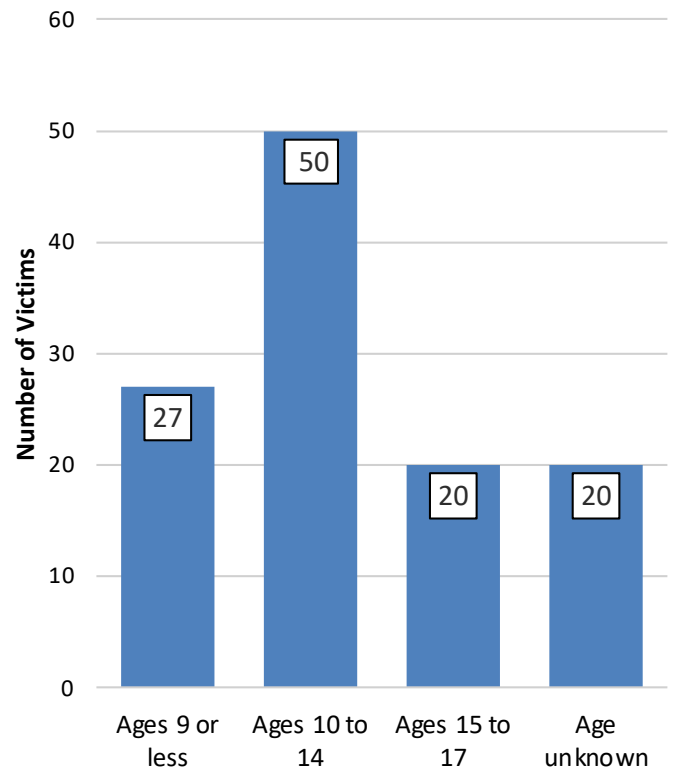


Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Compared to fiscal year 2024, slightly more of the victims are male (87 percent of abuse victims were male in 2025 compared to 84 percent in 2024).

Figure 7 presents the distribution of victims by age at the time the alleged abuse began. Twenty of the 117 credible allegations did not include information about the alleged victims' ages (17 percent). Among those 97 credible allegations where the ages are known, about half of allegations involved victims who were between the ages of 10 and 14 (52 percent) when the alleged abuse began. Almost three-tenths was under age 10 (28 percent) and one in six was between the ages of 15 and 17 (21 percent).

Figure 7. Age of Victim When Abuse Began: Dioceses and Eparchies



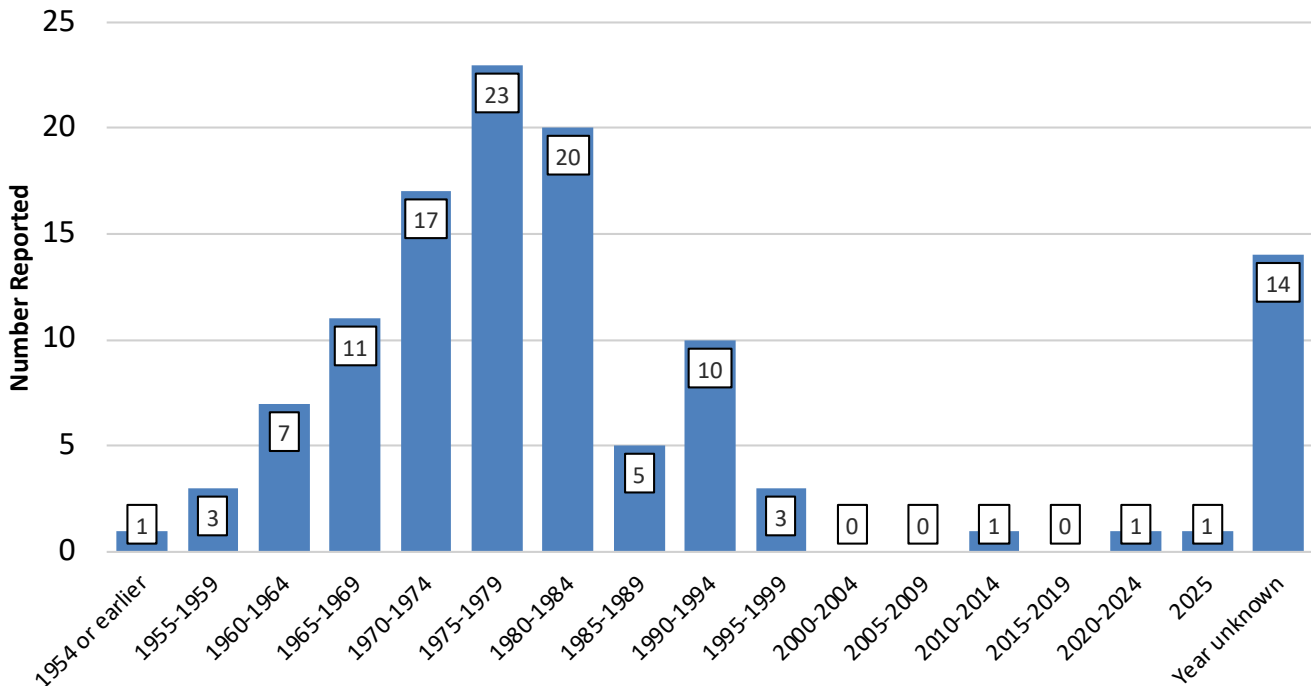
Source: 2025 Survey of Costs and Allegations

This year's percentages differ somewhat from those in year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). For that time period, 20 percent of allegations involved victims ages 9 or younger, 60 percent involved victims between the ages of 10 and 14, and 20 percent involved victims between the ages of 15 and 17.

Figure 8 shows the years in which the abuse reported was alleged to have occurred or begun. For fourteen of the allegations (12 percent) deemed credible between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, no time frame for the alleged abuse could be determined. Among those 103 where a time frame could be determined, 38 percent of all new allegations were said to have occurred or begun before 1975, 60 percent between 1975 and 1999, and 2 percent since 2000. The most common time period for allegations reported was 1975-1979 (23 allegations), followed by 1980-1984 (20 allegations).⁶ Looked at another way, four-fifths (81 percent) of all allegations able to be classified by year were said to have occurred or begun in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

⁶ Note that this distribution is similar to Figure 34, which shows the cumulative distribution since 2004.

Figure 8. Year the Alleged Offense Occured or Began: Dioceses and Eparchies

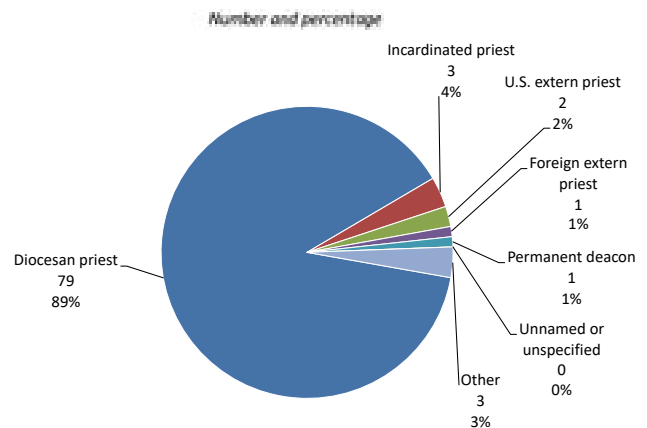


Source: 2025 Survey of Costs and Allegations

Proportionately, the numbers reported in Figure 8 for year 2025 are slightly different from those reported for year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). For that time period, 40 percent of alleged offenses occurred or began before 1975, 50 percent between 1975 and 1999, and 9 percent after 2000.

The survey for 2025 also asks for details about the priests and deacons who were alleged perpetrators. Nine-tenths of the 89 diocesan or eparchial priests or deacons had been ordained for the diocese or eparchy in which the abuse was alleged to have occurred (89 percent were diocesan priests and 1 percent were permanent deacons). A combined 7 percent of those identified were priests who had been incardinated into that diocese or eparchy at the time of the alleged abuse (4 percent), extern priests from another U.S. diocese or eparchy (2 percent), or a foreign extern priest (1 percent). Three percent of alleged perpetrators were classified as “other.” For the three priests classified as “other,” one was a priest from another diocese, one was a diocesan priest that was “later ex-cardinated as bishop to another diocese,” and the final priest had an “unknown” status. Figure 9 displays the ecclesial status of offenders at the time of the alleged offense.

Figure 9. Ecclesial Status of Alleged Perpetrator: Dioceses and Eparchies



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

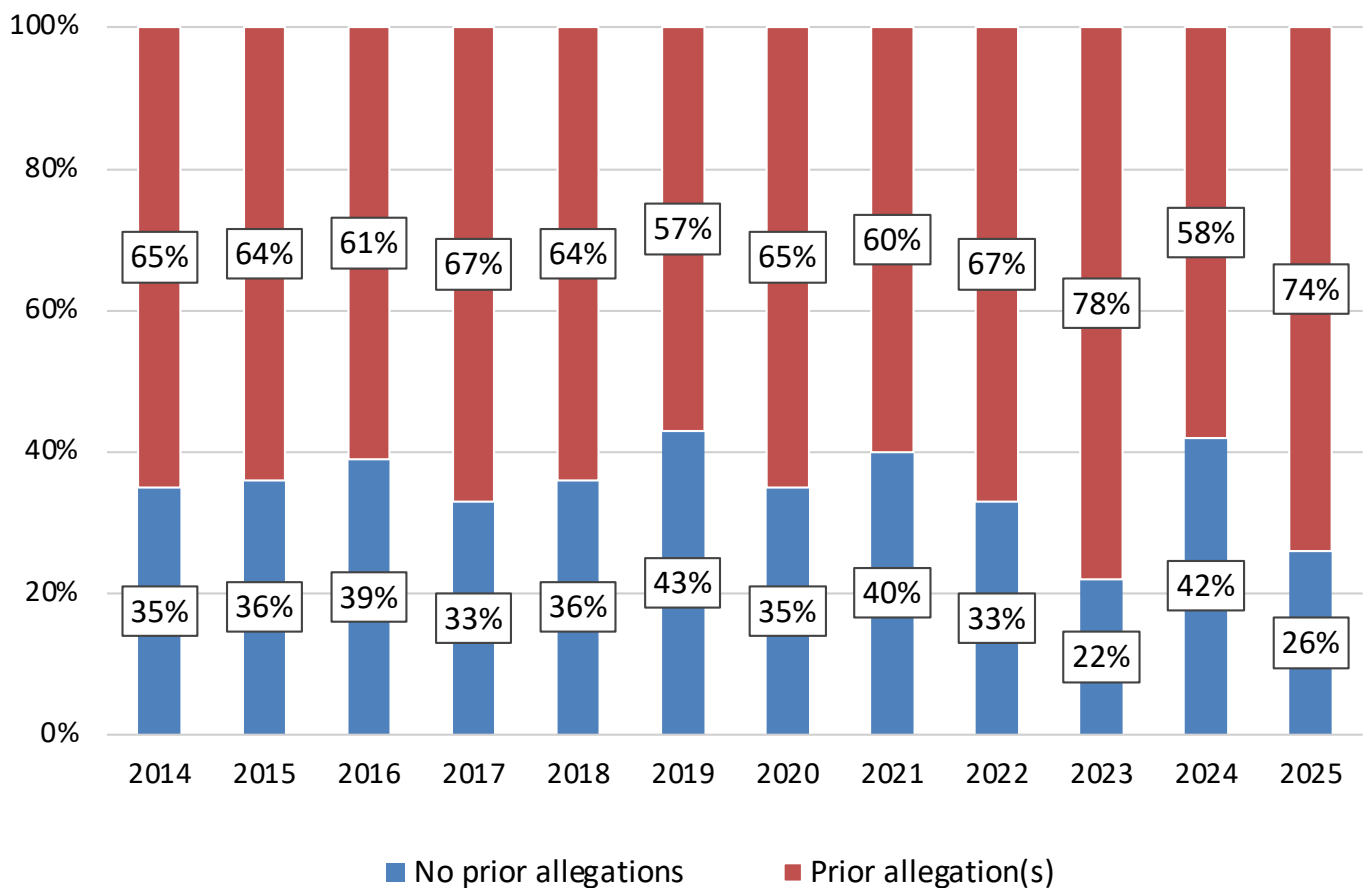
The percentages in Figure 9 for year 2025 differ only slightly from those reported for year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), where a combined 93 percent of alleged perpetrators were priests (91 percent) or permanent deacons (2 percent) who had been ordained for the diocese or eparchy in which the abuse was alleged to have occurred. Incardinated priests accounted for 2 percent of all alleged perpetrators,

U.S. extern priests for 3 percent, and all other categories for 1 percent each.

Three-quarters (66 priests and deacons or 74 percent) of the priests and deacons identified as alleged offenders between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 had already been identified in allegations in previous years. As can be seen in Figure 10 below, this is a higher percentage than that reported in the previous fiscal year.

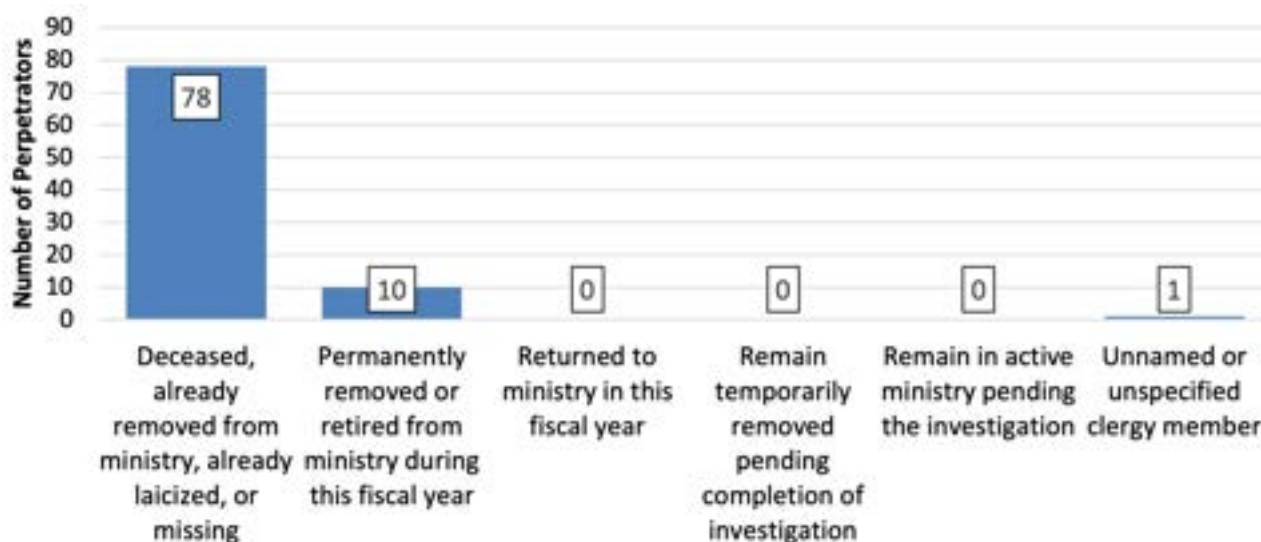
Figure 11 shows the current status of the alleged offenders. Among those 89 alleged perpetrators that were classified, nine-tenths of the alleged offenders identified between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 are deceased, already removed from ministry, already laicized, or missing (89 percent). Another ten priests or deacons identified during fiscal year 2025 were permanently removed from ministry during that time (11 percent). There were no offenders that were temporarily removed from ministry pending investigation of the allegations. Nor were there any alleged offenders that remained in active ministry during that fiscal year pending the investigation.

Figure 10. Percentage of Alleged Perpetrators with Prior Allegations: Dioceses and Eparchies



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Figure 11. Current Status of Alleged Perpetrators: Dioceses and Eparchies



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

The proportions for fiscal year 2025 differ slightly from those for fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). For the previous fiscal year, 84 percent of alleged perpetrators were deceased, already removed, or missing, 11 percent were permanently removed or retired from ministry during that time period, 4 percent remained temporarily removed pending completion of an investigation, and 1 percent remained in active ministry.

Costs to Dioceses and Eparchies

Dioceses and eparchies that responded to the survey and reported costs related to allegations, paid out \$389,961,007 between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.⁷ Like in previous years' surveys, this includes payments for allegations reported in previous years. Table 2 presents payments by dioceses and eparchies according to several categories of allegation-related expenses for the fiscal years 2014 to 2025.⁸

⁷ These costs are not evenly spread out among the dioceses and eparchies. For example, 25 percent of dioceses and eparchies did *not* pay out any settlements to victims during fiscal year 2025, and an additional 23 dioceses and eparchies (12 percent) paid out less than \$10,000. On the other end of the scale, the three dioceses paying the greatest amount report settlements to victims totaled more than \$199 million, which accounts for 72 percent of the total \$276 million of settlements paid to victims.

⁸ Attorneys' fees include all costs for attorneys paid by dioceses and eparchies between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 as the result of allegations of sexual abuse of a minor.

Table 2. Costs Related to Allegations: Dioceses and Eparchies

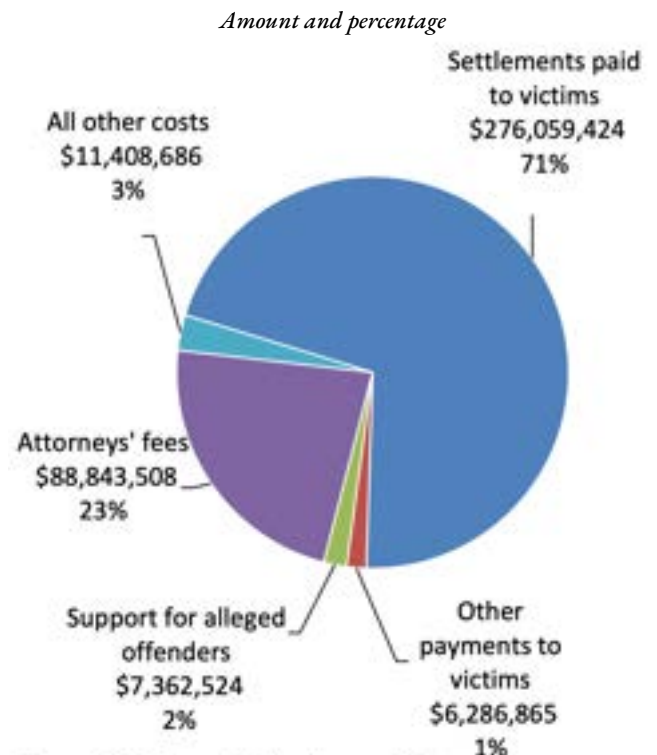
	Settlements	Other Payments to Victims	Support for Offenders	Attorneys' Fees	Other Costs	GRAND TOTAL
FY 2014	\$56,987,635	\$7,176,376	\$12,281,089	\$26,163,298	\$3,890,782	\$106,499,180
FY 2015	\$87,067,257	\$8,754,747	\$11,500,539	\$30,148,535	\$3,812,716	\$141,283,794
FY 2016	\$53,928,745	\$24,148,603	\$11,355,969	\$35,460,551	\$2,020,470	\$126,914,338
FY 2017	\$162,039,485	\$10,105,226	\$10,157,172	\$27,912,123	\$2,761,290	\$212,975,296
FY 2018	\$180,475,951	\$6,914,194	\$20,035,914	\$25,990,265	\$5,755,823	\$239,172,147
FY 2019	\$200,963,319	\$15,890,882	\$12,054,682	\$43,294,968	\$9,407,966	\$281,611,817
FY 2020	\$219,792,758	\$12,096,388	\$11,960,504	\$56,958,656	\$11,172,360	\$311,980,666
FY 2021	\$118,516,493	\$13,103,280	\$9,972,414	\$45,597,100	\$6,930,931	\$194,120,218
FY 2022	\$95,930,064	\$6,801,054	\$9,484,728	\$40,578,200	\$4,258,097	\$157,052,143
FY 2023	\$191,134,659	\$7,213,945	\$7,440,150	\$50,045,103	\$4,675,671	\$260,509,528
FY 2024	\$163,088,875	\$6,091,769	\$6,024,898	\$63,443,863	\$4,149,996	\$242,799,401
FY 2025	\$276,059,424	\$6,286,865	\$7,362,524	\$88,843,508	\$11,408,686	\$389,961,007
Change (+/-) 2024-2025	\$112,970,549	\$195,096	\$1,337,626	\$25,399,645	\$7,258,690	\$147,161,606
Percentage Change	69%	3%	22%	40%	175%	61%

Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2014-2025

As can be seen in Table 2 above, the total costs for year 2025 (\$389,961,007) is 61 percent higher than that reported for year 2024 (\$242,799,401). That increase is mostly tied to the increase in the settlement amounts paid during the year 2025, which increased by 69 percent. This may, in large part, due to the removal of the civil statute of limitations for child sex abuse allegations.

Figure 12 presents the total dollar amounts for each of the five categories of payments in Table 2 as well as what percentage each constitutes of the total costs related to allegations. About a combined seven-tenths are for the settlements paid to the victims (71 percent) and other payments to victims (1 percent). The other major category is attorneys' fees (23 percent), with support for alleged offenders (2 percent) and all other costs (3 percent) making up the remainder.

Figure 12. Costs Related to Allegations: Dioceses and Eparchies



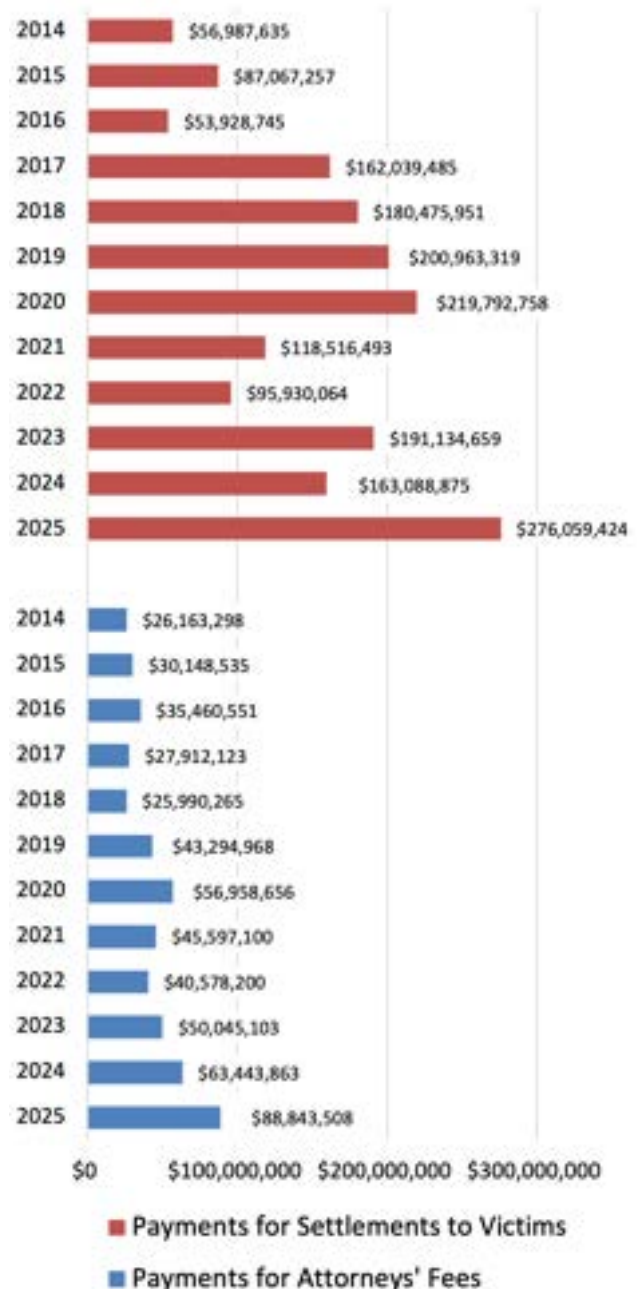
Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

This differs slightly from the last fiscal year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), where settlements paid to victims accounted for 67 percent of all costs related to allegations, attorneys’ fees made up 26 percent, other payments to victims made up 3 percent, support for alleged offenders accounted for 2 percent, and all other costs accounted for 2 percent.

Among the \$11,408,686 (or 3 percent) of “other” allegation-related costs reported by dioceses and eparchies are payments for items or services such as costs for audits, bankruptcy-related annual fees, expenses for hotline phones, a state attorney general investigation, investigation-related costs, IRCP interest payments, mediation fees, postage and shipping costs, review board costs, and the USCCB *Charter*.

Figure 13 displays the costs paid by dioceses and eparchies for settlements and for attorneys’ fees for audit years 2014 through 2025. The amount of payments for settlements to victims for fiscal year 2025 is 59 percent higher than that for fiscal year 2024. The payments for attorneys’ fees paid is also greater than that for last year, with an increase of 51 percent.

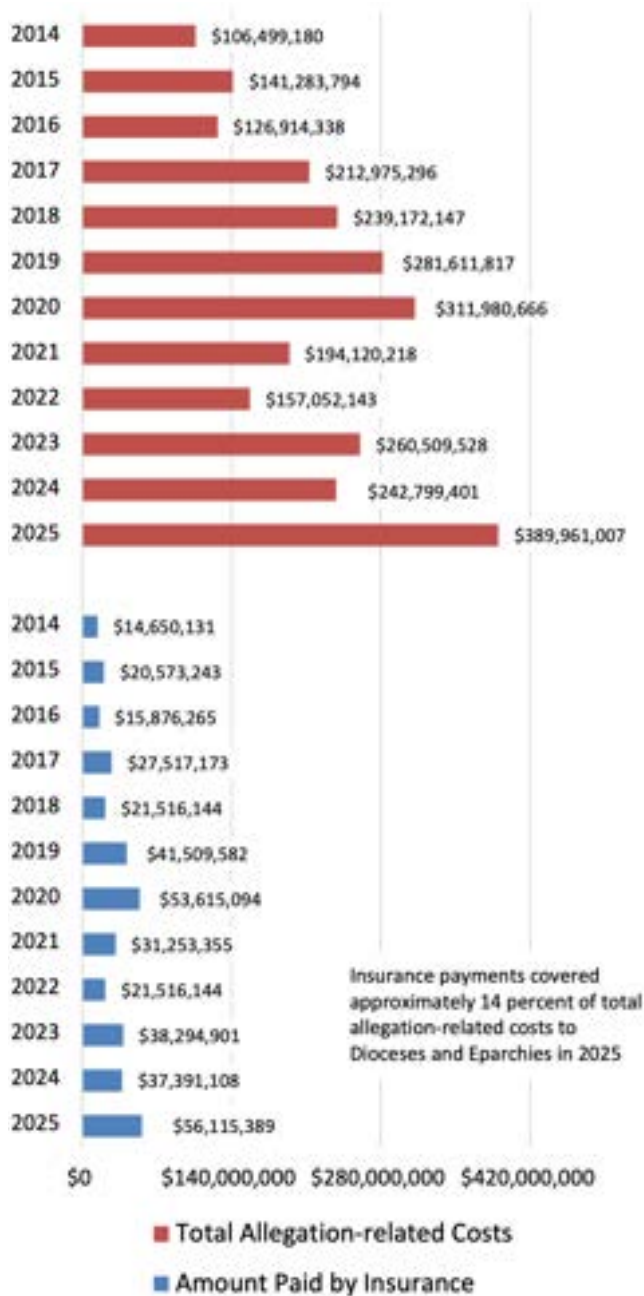
Figure 13. Payments for Settlements to Victims and for Attorneys’ Fees: Dioceses and Eparchies



In Figure 14, the total allegation-related costs paid by dioceses and eparchies are shown as well as the approximate proportion of those costs that were covered by insurance. Insurance payments covered approximately \$56,115,389 (14.4 percent) of the total allegation-related costs paid by dioceses and eparchies between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

Insurance had covered 15 percent of the total allegation-related costs during year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024).

Figure 14. Total Allegation-related Costs and the Costs Paid by Insurance: Dioceses and Eparchies



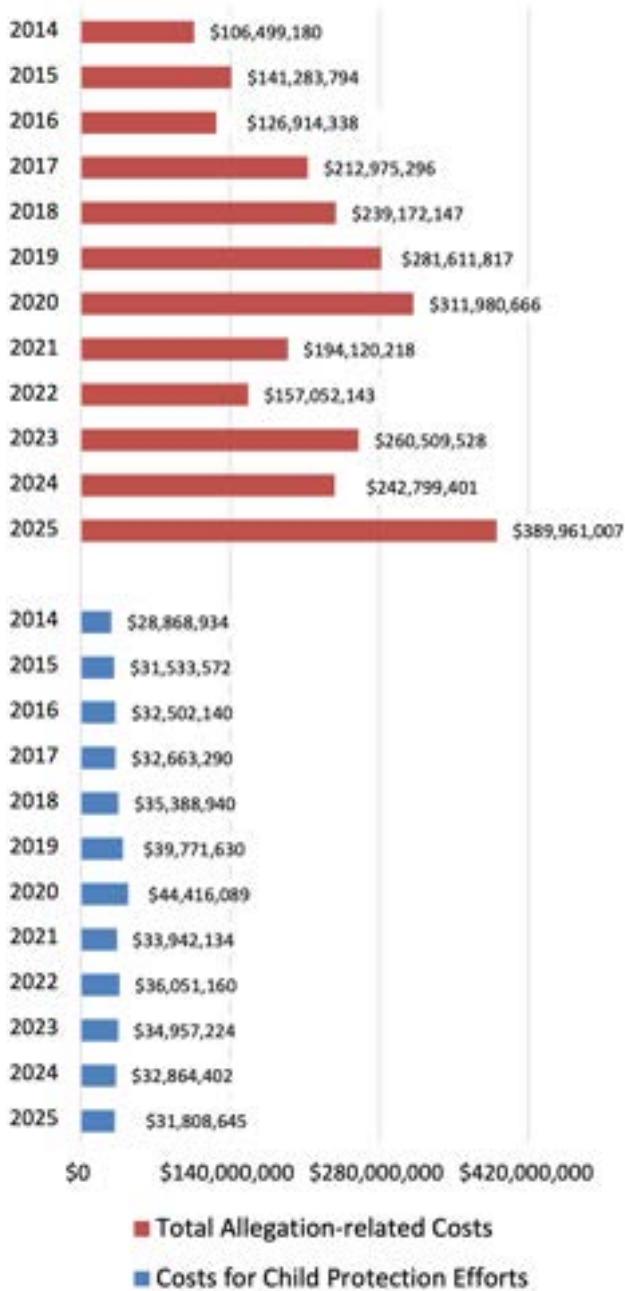
Of the 191 dioceses and eparchies that reported allegation-related costs in fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), 70 responded to a series of questions concerning what monetary sources or changes were used to pay for those costs. Among those with costs, the sources or changes they indicated include insurance pay-outs (29 percent or 20 dioceses), sale of property (5 percent or four dioceses), restructuring of debt (14 percent or six dioceses), and bankruptcy filing (2 percent or two dioceses).

Among the 70 dioceses, 38 wrote in an “other” source (54 percent),⁹ including: their savings or reserves (18 percent or seven dioceses), their general operating budget (18 percent or seven dioceses), funds from their self-insurance reserves (16 percent or six dioceses), liquidating their investments (13 percent or five dioceses), loans or lines of credit (5 percent or two dioceses), newly established OCYP funds (5 percent or two dioceses) and other contributions (5 percent or one diocese).

In addition to allegations-related expenditures, at least \$31,808,645 was spent by dioceses and eparchies for child protection efforts such as safe environment coordinators, training programs and background checks. This represents a 3 percent decrease from the amount reported for child protection efforts (\$32,864,402) for year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). Figure 15 compares child protection expenditures paid by dioceses and eparchies (which, comparatively, remain relatively constant) to the total allegation-related costs in audit years 2014 through 2025 (which vary a great deal).

⁹ These percentages total to more than 100 percent because respondents were invited to check all of the sources that applied to them.

Figure 15. Total Allegation-related Costs and Costs for Child Protection Efforts: Dioceses and Eparchies



Adding together the total allegation-related costs and the amount spent on child protection efforts reported in year 2025 for dioceses and eparchies, the total comes to \$421,769,652. This is a 53 percent increase from the \$275,663,803 reported during audit year 2024.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF MEN

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) also encouraged the major superiors of religious communities of men to complete a survey for their congregations, provinces, and monasteries. Since 2014, brother-only communities were also invited to participate in the survey. Much of the survey was nearly identical to the survey for dioceses and eparchies and was also available online at the same site as the survey for dioceses and eparchies. CMSM sent an email about the survey to all member major superiors in September 2025, requesting their participation. CARA and CMSM also sent several reminders by email to major superiors to encourage them to respond. By January 2026, CARA received responses from 136 of the 223 relevant member communities that belong to CMSM, for a response rate of 61 percent. This is slightly lower than the response rate from the 2024 survey (64%), the 2023 survey (63 percent), and the 2022 survey (67 percent). It is also lower than the response rates from previous years: 68 percent in 2020 and 2006, 79 percent in 2019, 85 percent in 2018, 74 percent in 2017, 78 percent in 2016, 77 percent in 2015, 73 percent in 2014, 2012, 2011, 2009, 2008, and 2007, 72 percent in 2013 and 2010, 67 percent in 2005, and 71 percent in 2004.

A copy of the survey instrument for religious communities is included in Appendix II.

Credible Allegations Received by Religious Communities

The responding religious communities reported that between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 they deemed as credible 39 allegations of sexual abuse of a minor committed by a priest, brother, or deacon of their community. These allegations were made by 38 persons against 34 individuals who were priest, brother, or deacon members of the community at the time the offense was alleged to have occurred.¹⁰

Table 3 presents these numbers. Among the 38 allegations deemed credible during this reporting period (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) that were *not* cases solely involving child pornography, none of the time frames for

¹⁰ As was mentioned in the Introduction, the 2020 survey was the first to collect details about all allegations that were deemed credible during the past fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) regardless of when they were first reported to the arch/diocese, eparchy, or religious community. Thus, comparisons in this subsection are only shown for the four surveys using the same criteria for credible allegations. Previous year's numbers can be viewed in the 2019 report available on the USCCB website at https://cdn.ymaws.com/usccb.site-ym.com/resource/group/1560f0d7-fee7-4aff-afd2-4cf076a24943/resource_toolbox/audit/2019_annual_report_final.pdf

when the allegations began or occurred were in the past 18 years. So, all of those allegations were made by adults who are alleging abuse when they were minors.

Table 3. New Allegations Deemed Credible in FY 2025: Religious Communities of Men

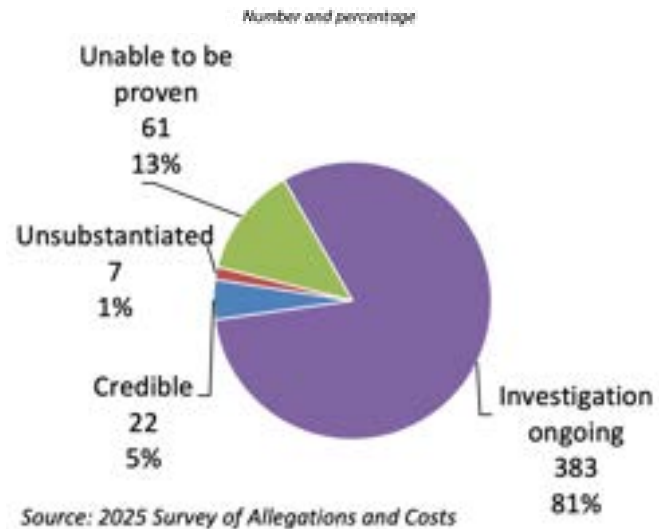
	Victims	Allegations	Offenders
FY 2025	38	39	34
FY 2024	40	40	26
FY 2023	111	113	69
FY 2022	148	149	133
FY 2021	252	252	242
FY 2020	383	383	230

Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2020-2025

Determination of Credibility for Allegations First Received in Previous Fiscal Years

Every religious community follows a process to determine the credibility of any allegation of clergy sexual abuse, as set forth in canon law and as advised in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Religious communities were asked to categorize these new allegations into one of these categories: credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, and investigation ongoing.¹¹ Figure 16 shows those allegations first received before July 1, 2024 that were resolved by June 30, 2025 (473 in total). One in 20 of the previously received allegations was found to be credible (5 percent). Among the others, four-fifths need further investigation (81 percent), about one in ten was found to be unable to be proven (13 percent), and less than one in 20 was found to be unsubstantiated (1 percent).

Figure 16. Resolution in Fiscal Year 2025 of Allegations First Received before July 1, 2024: Religious Communities

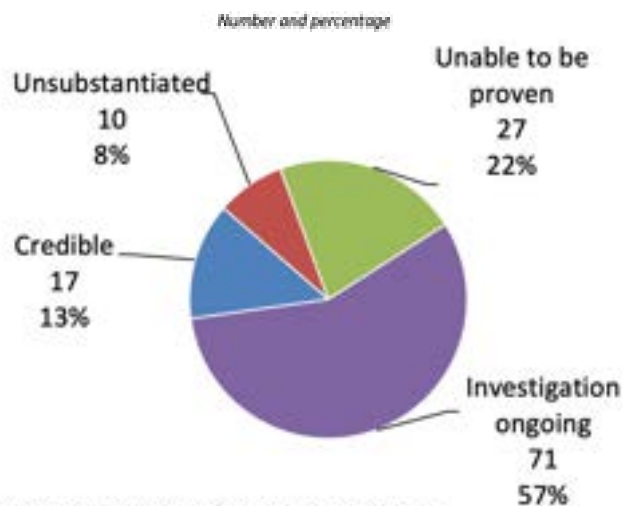


Determination of Credibility for Allegations First Received in This Fiscal Year

Figure 17 presents the outcome for 125 allegations first received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Religious communities were again asked to categorize these new allegations into one of these categories: credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, and investigation ongoing. About one-tenth of new allegations received in fiscal year 2025 was found to be credible (13 percent). Among the others, almost three-fifths need further investigation (57 percent), just over one in five was found to be unable to be proven (22 percent), and about one in ten was found to be unsubstantiated (8 percent).

¹¹ The definitions of these terms are presented on the survey in Appendix II.

Figure 17. Determination of Credibility for New Allegations First Received in Fiscal Year 2025: Religious Communities

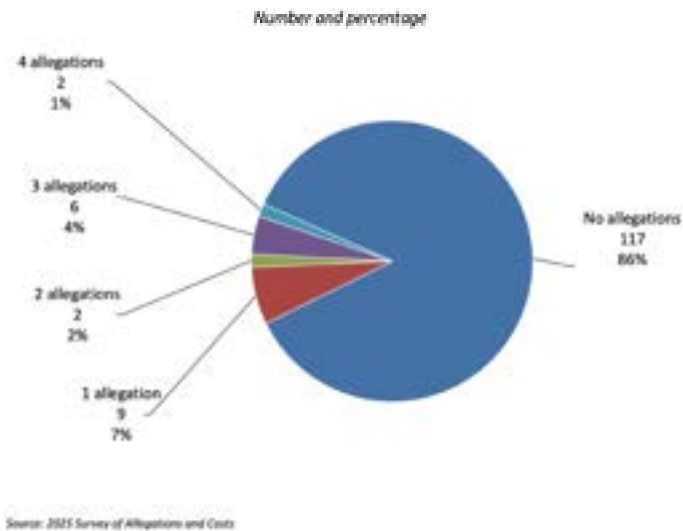


Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

The remainder of this subsection of the report for religious communities details the 39 allegations that have been classified as credible during this fiscal year, both those first received in a previous fiscal year (the 22 credible allegations shown in Figure 16) and those first received during this fiscal year (the 17 credible allegations shown in Figure 17).

To view how many religious communities of men had zero credible allegations, how many had a few, and how many had multiple allegations, Figure 18 displays the submissions this year for the 136 responding communities. Nearly nine in ten had zero credible allegations (86 percent) this year, 7 percent had one, and 2 percent had two. A combined one in 20 had three or four allegations (5 percent).

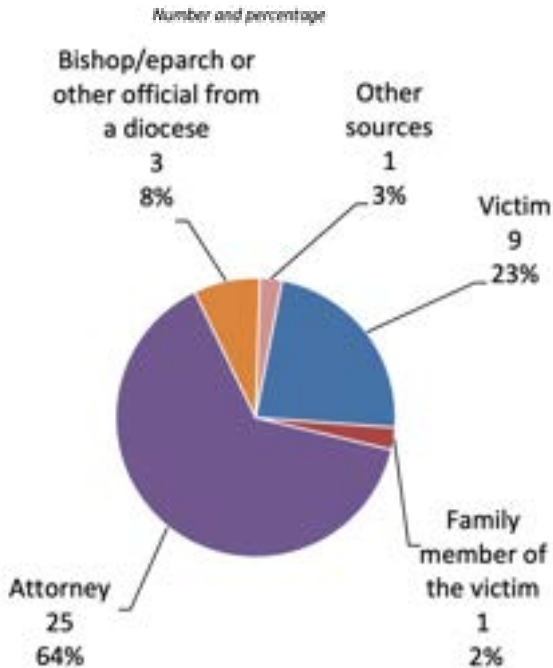
Figure 18. Summary of the Number of Credible Allegations Reported in 2025: Religious Communities



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Figure 19 displays the way in which the 39 allegations of abuse that were deemed as credible between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 were first reported to the religious communities. Nearly two-thirds of the allegations were reported to the community by an attorney (64 percent), a combined quarter from the victim (23 percent) or a family member of the victim (2 percent), about one-tenth from a bishop or eparch from a diocese (8 percent), and 3 percent from an “other source” (which was not specified).

Figure 19. Sources for How Allegations of Abuse Were First Reported: Religious Communities

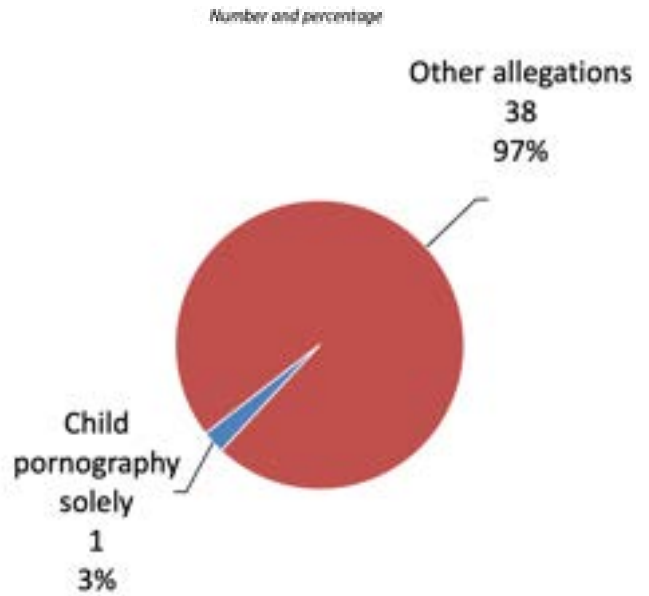


Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Compared to fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), more allegations were reported by a bishop or eparch from a diocese (28 percent in survey year 2024) and fewer were reported by an attorney (55 percent in survey year 2024).

One of the 39 new allegations was a case solely involving child pornography (3 percent).

Figure 20. Percentage of Allegations Solely Involving Child Pornography: Religious Communities



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

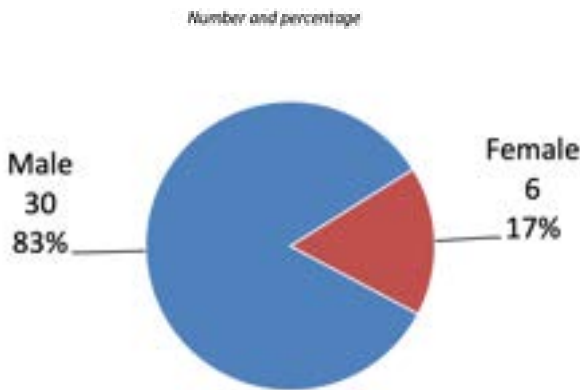
In report year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), none of the allegations solely involved child pornography (0 percent).

From here forward in this subsection, the 38 victims of allegations that did not solely involve child pornography are described and detailed.

Victims, Offenses, and Offenders

For two of the 38 allegations that are not solely child pornography possession, the gender of the alleged victim is unknown (5 percent). Among the 36 allegations where the gender of the victim was reported, more than four-fifths were male (83 percent) and one-sixth was a female (17 percent). These proportions are displayed in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Gender of Abuse Victim: Religious Communities

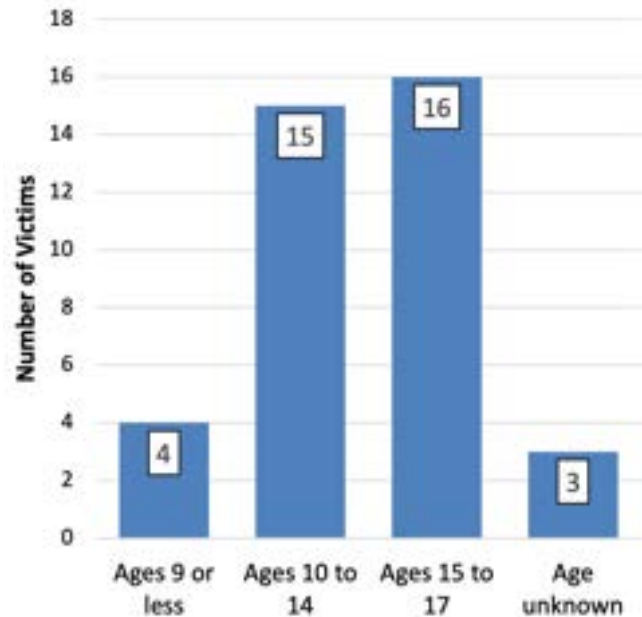


Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

The percentage male among victims (83 percent) is slightly higher than that reported for year 2024 (74 percent).

For three of the 38 victims, the age when the alleged abuse occurred is unknown (8 percent). Among those 35 allegations where the age was known, nearly half were ages 15 to 17 (46 percent) when the alleged abuse began, about two-fifths were ages 10 to 14 (43 percent), and about one in ten was under age ten (11 percent). Figure 22 presents the distribution of victims by age at the time the alleged abuse began.

Figure 22. Age of Victim When Abuse Began: Religious Communities



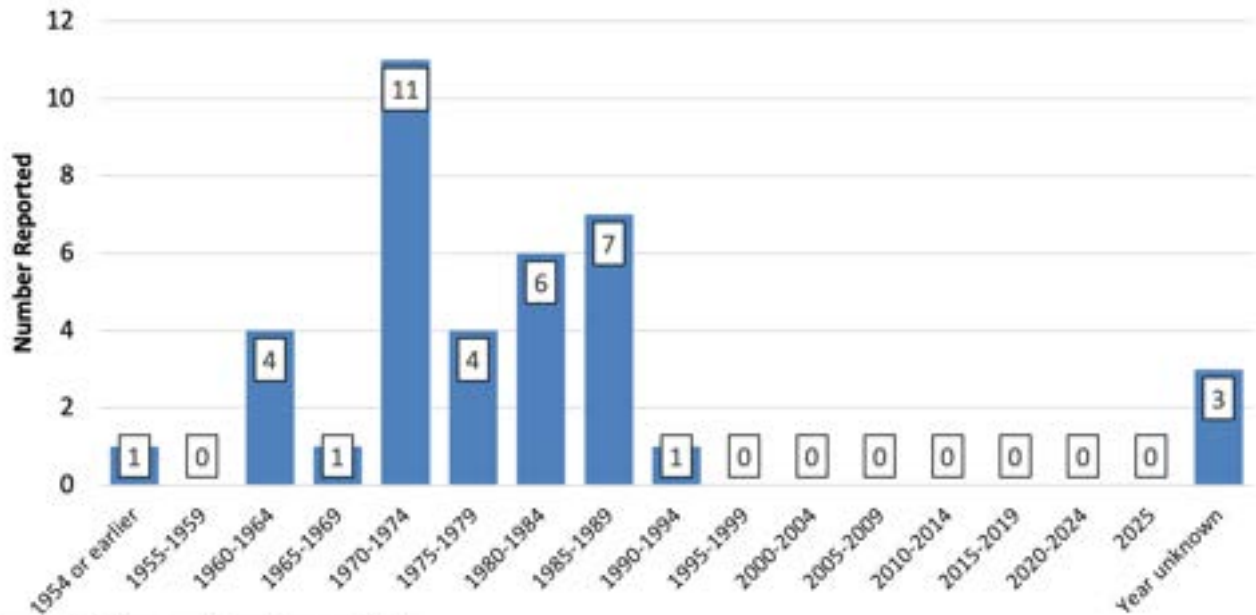
Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

The proportions for the previous reporting year (2024) differ somewhat from those presented in Figure 22. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, 21 percent were under age ten (compared to 11 percent in 2025), 35 percent of the victims were between 10 and 14 (compared to 43 percent in fiscal year 2025), and 44 percent were between the ages of 15 and 17 (compared to the 46 percent reported in 2025).

Three of the 38 allegations did not include a time frame for when it occurred or began (8 percent). Among those 35 allegations where a time frame was known, half of the allegations deemed credible between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 are alleged to have occurred or begun before 1975 (49 percent), half occurred or began between 1975 and 1999 (51 percent), and none occurred or began since 2000. Religious communities reported that 1970-1974 (11 allegations) was the most common time period for the alleged occurrences. Figure 23 illustrates the years when the allegations classified as credible in year 2025 were said to have occurred or begun.¹²

¹² Note that this distribution differs some from Figure 34, which shows the cumulative distribution since 2004.

Figure 23. Year the Alleged Offense Occured or Began: Religious Communities

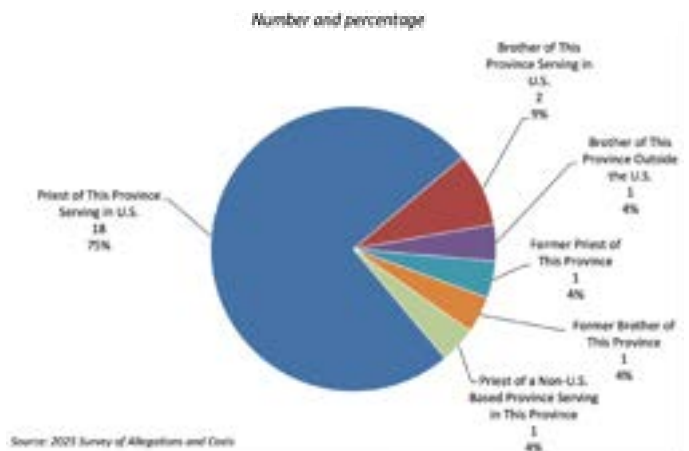


Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

In the previous reporting year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), 44 percent of allegations occurred or began before 1975, 46 percent between 1975 and 1999, and 10 percent in 2000 or later.

The survey for 2025 also asked for details about the religious priests, brothers and deacons who were alleged perpetrators. Of the 34 religious priests, brothers, and deacons against whom credible allegations were determined between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, ten (or 29 percent) were unnamed or unable to be classified as of June 30, 2025, likely due to current civil investigations or litigation. Figure 24 displays the ecclesial status of the 24 identified alleged offenders at the time of the alleged abuse. Three in four were priests of a U.S. province of the religious community serving in the United States at the time the abuse was alleged to have occurred (75 percent), and one-tenth was a religious brother of a U.S. province of the religious community (9 percent). One religious community each identified a brother of their province outside the U.S. (4 percent), an alleged perpetrator as a former priest of their province (4 percent), a former brother of their province (4 percent), and a priest of a non-U.S.-based province serving in their province (4 percent).

Figure 24. Ecclesial Status of Alleged Perpetrator: Religious Communities



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

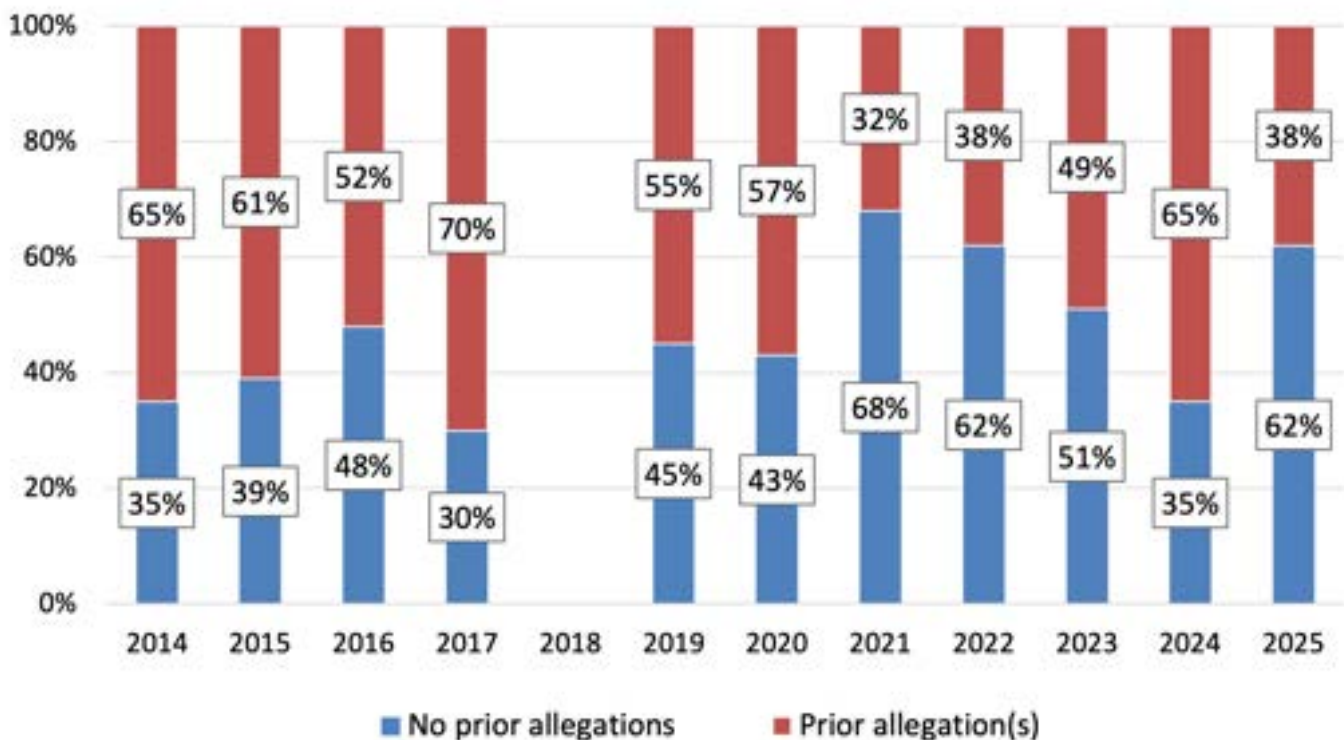
Compared to the previous reporting year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), the percentages reported in 2025 in Figure 24 differ in some ways. In 2024, 65 percent of the alleged perpetrators were priests of the province serving in the United States, and 15 percent were former priests of the province.

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About two in five of the 34 priests, deacons, and brothers identified as alleged offenders by religious communities between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 had already been identified in allegations in previous years (13 priests, deacons, and brothers or 38 percent).¹³ As can be seen in Figure 25 below, this is a lower percentage than that reported in the two most recent fiscal years but is similar to the percentages for 2021 and 2022.

Figure 26 shows the current status of all of the alleged offenders, with the status of ten of the 34 alleged offenders unknown (29 percent). Among the 24 with a known status, nearly nine in ten alleged offenders identified between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 are deceased, already removed from ministry, already laicized, or missing (87 percent). Another three priests, brothers or deacons identified during fiscal year 2024 were permanently removed from ministry during that time (13 percent). None were returned to ministry.

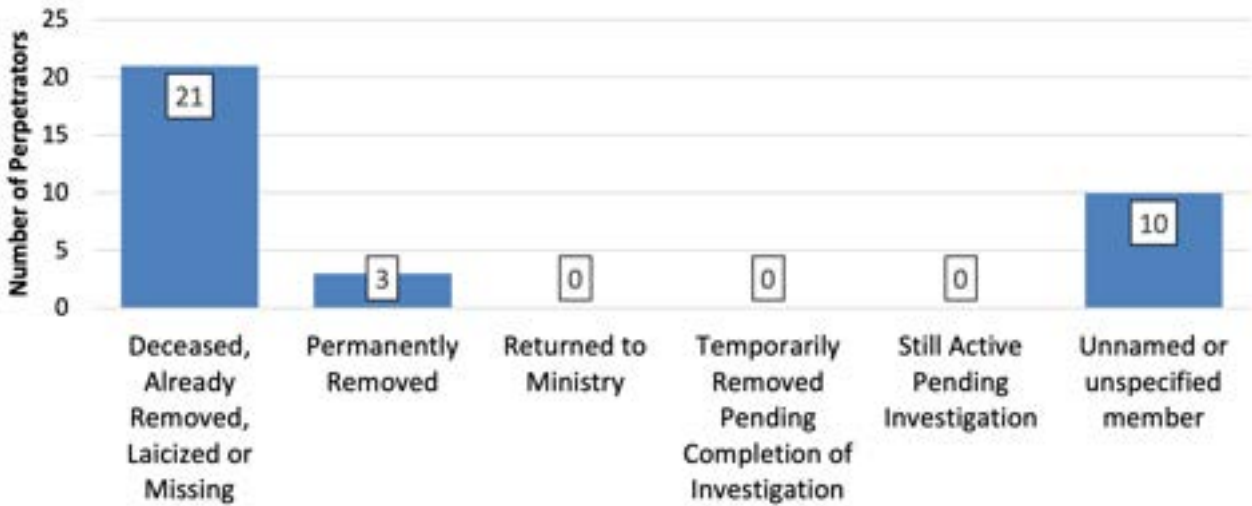
Figure 25. Percentage of Alleged Perpetrators with Prior Allegations: Religious Communities



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

¹³ This question was accidentally omitted from the 2018 survey.

Figure 26. Current Status of Alleged Perpetrators: Religious Communities



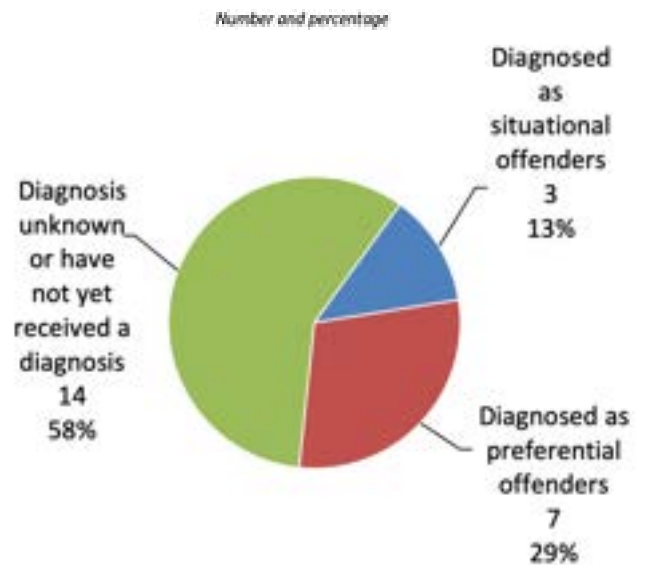
Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Last year’s survey had slightly different percentages, with 80 percent deceased, already removed from ministry, laicized or missing and 20 percent permanently removed from ministry during that fiscal year.

This year, for the eighth time, questions were asked of the religious communities concerning the psychological diagnoses of the alleged perpetrators reported in the current year, with definitions provided to responding religious communities. Those diagnosed as situational offenders were defined as those who molest “the child for various reasons – most often because of availability – whether male or female – but do NOT have a preference for pre-pubescent children.” Perpetrators diagnosed as preferential offenders “are most often ‘pedophiles,’ who prefer and seek out jobs or ministries with pre-pubescent children.” Finally, those whose diagnosis is not known are those whose records are too “unclear to distinguish any type.”

The proportion of alleged perpetrators from the 2025 reporting year that fit each definition is presented in Figure 27 below. Almost six in ten do not have diagnoses (58 percent) and three in ten has been identified as a preferential offender (29 percent). Thirteen percent have been identified as situational offenders.

Figure 27. Diagnosis of Alleged Perpetrators Reported in 2025: Religious Communities



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

In the survey for the past fiscal year (July 1, 2023 to June 31, 2024), 69 percent had an unknown diagnosis, 19 percent were diagnosed as situational offenders, and 12 percent as preferential offenders.

Among those reported in Figure 27, responding religious communities were also asked how many from each category were known to have re-offended. All three offenders diagnosed as a situational offender were identified as having re-offended and all seven offenders diagnosed as preferential offenders were identified as having re-offended. Finally, among the 14 whose diagnosis is unknown, 14 were identified as having re-offended.

Costs to Religious Communities

Altogether, the responding religious communities reported paying \$93,573,309 between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 for costs related to allegations. Like in previous years' surveys, this includes costs paid during this period for allegations reported in previous years. Table 4 presents the payments by religious communities across several categories of allegation-related expenses.¹⁴ Among all of the categories, there was an increase in costs, ranging from 1 percent to 650 percent.

Among the "other costs" written in by religious communities are contracted investigators, insurance premiums, one-time alms assistance to a victim, and travel costs.

Table 4. Costs Related to Allegations: Religious Communities

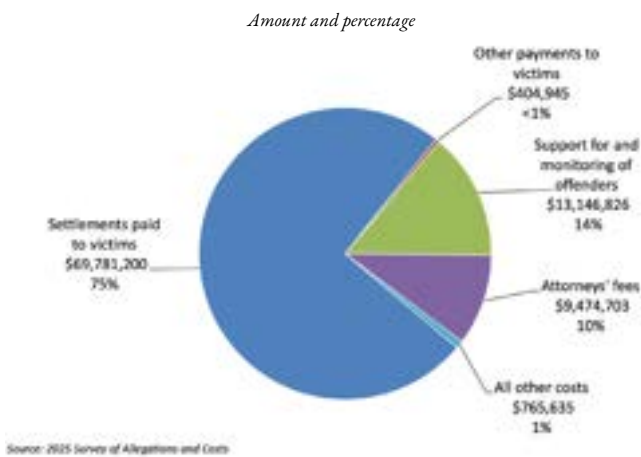
	Settlements	Other Payments to Victims	Support for Offenders	Attorneys' Fees	Other Costs	GRAND TOTAL
FY 2014	\$5,950,438	\$570,721	\$3,121,958	\$2,611,220	\$326,130	\$12,580,467
FY 2015	\$5,451,612	\$337,696	\$2,507,513	\$3,592,233	\$446,696	\$12,335,750
FY 2016	\$6,451,112	\$533,626	\$2,887,150	\$4,427,186	\$106,389	\$14,405,463
FY 2017	\$6,749,006	\$466,591	\$2,869,490	\$5,097,723	\$798,569	\$15,981,379
FY 2018	\$13,870,340	\$403,710	\$3,330,931	\$4,527,393	\$1,315,016	\$23,447,390
FY 2019	\$30,131,119	\$930,972	\$3,594,140	\$5,899,252	\$851,705	\$41,407,188
FY 2020	\$14,835,324	\$1,103,112	\$4,726,637	\$9,031,682	\$588,381	\$30,285,136
FY 2021	\$15,059,613	\$382,035	\$4,203,407	\$8,783,079	\$1,024,167	\$29,452,301
FY 2022	\$30,742,002	\$553,237	\$4,416,504	\$8,827,778	\$382,031	\$44,921,552
FY 2023	\$12,074,953	\$266,843	\$3,528,113	\$7,244,054	\$420,334	\$23,534,297
FY 2024	\$10,036,027	\$401,771	\$4,643,397	\$8,381,903	\$102,052	\$23,565,150
FY 2025	\$69,781,200	\$404,945	\$13,146,826	\$9,474,703	\$765,635	\$93,573,309
Change (+/-) 2024-2025	\$59,745,173	\$3,174	\$8,503,429	\$1,092,800	\$663,583	\$70,008,159
Percentage Change	595%	1%	183%	13%	650%	297%

Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2014-2025

¹⁴ These costs are not evenly spread out among religious communities. For example, 71 percent of religious communities of men did *not* pay out any settlements to victims during fiscal year 2025, with an additional two paying out less than \$1,000. On the other end of the scale, the two religious communities paying the greatest amounts report settlements to victims totaling more than \$46.2 million dollars, which accounts for 66 percent of the total amount of settlements paid to victims.

Figure 28 presents the total dollar amounts for each of the five categories of payments shown in Table 4 as well as what percentage each constitutes of the total costs related to allegations. Combined, three-fourths were for the settlements paid to the victims (75 percent) and other payments to victims (less than 1 percent). About one-tenth of the costs each are for support for and monitoring of alleged offenders (14 percent) and for attorneys’ fees (10 percent). Among those writing in an “other” cost, they mention investigators, insurance premiums, and travel costs.

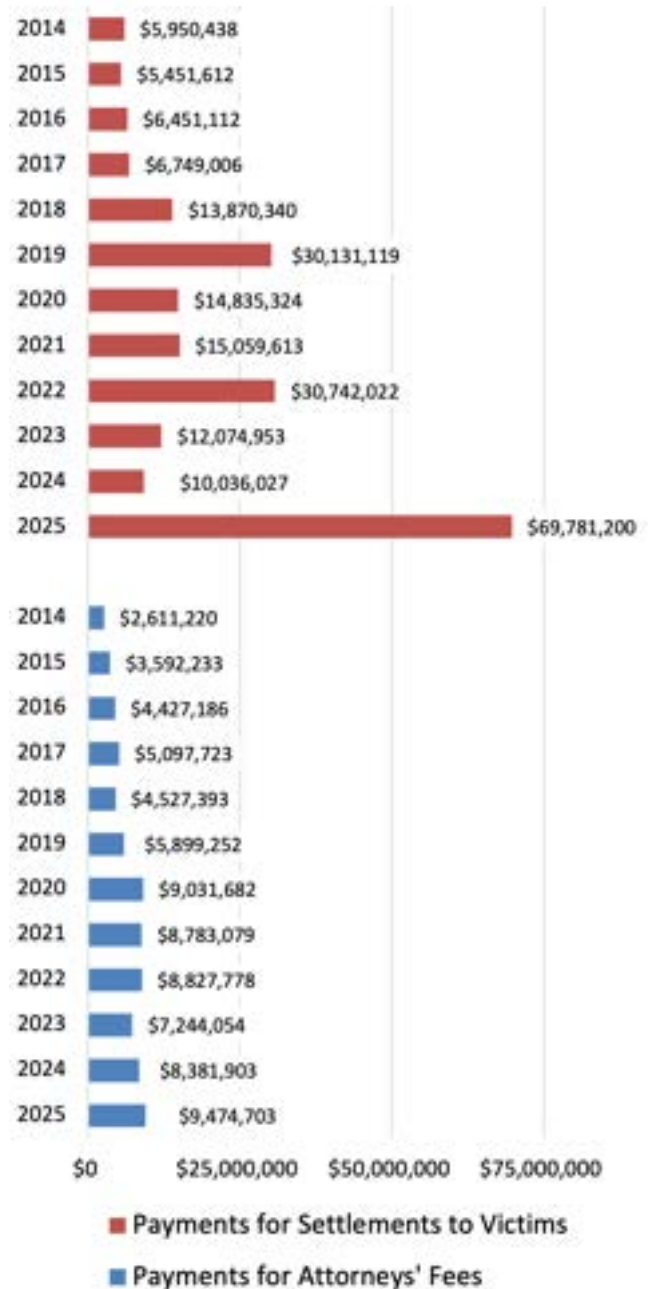
Figure 28. Costs Related to Allegations: Religious Communities of Men



This differs some from the last fiscal year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), where settlements paid to victims accounted for 43 percent of all costs, attorneys’ fees made up 35 percent, support for and monitoring of offenders accounted for 20 percent, all other payments to victims accounted for 2 percent, and all other costs made up less than 1 percent.

Figure 29 illustrates the settlement-related costs and attorney’s fees paid by religious communities during reporting years 2014 through 2025. Compared to report year 2024, settlement-related costs in 2025 rose by about \$60 million, an increase of 595 percent. Attorneys’ fees in year 2025 rose by about \$1.1 million compared to year 2024, a 13 percent increase.

Figure 29. Payments for Settlements to Victims and for Attorneys’ Fees: Religious Communities

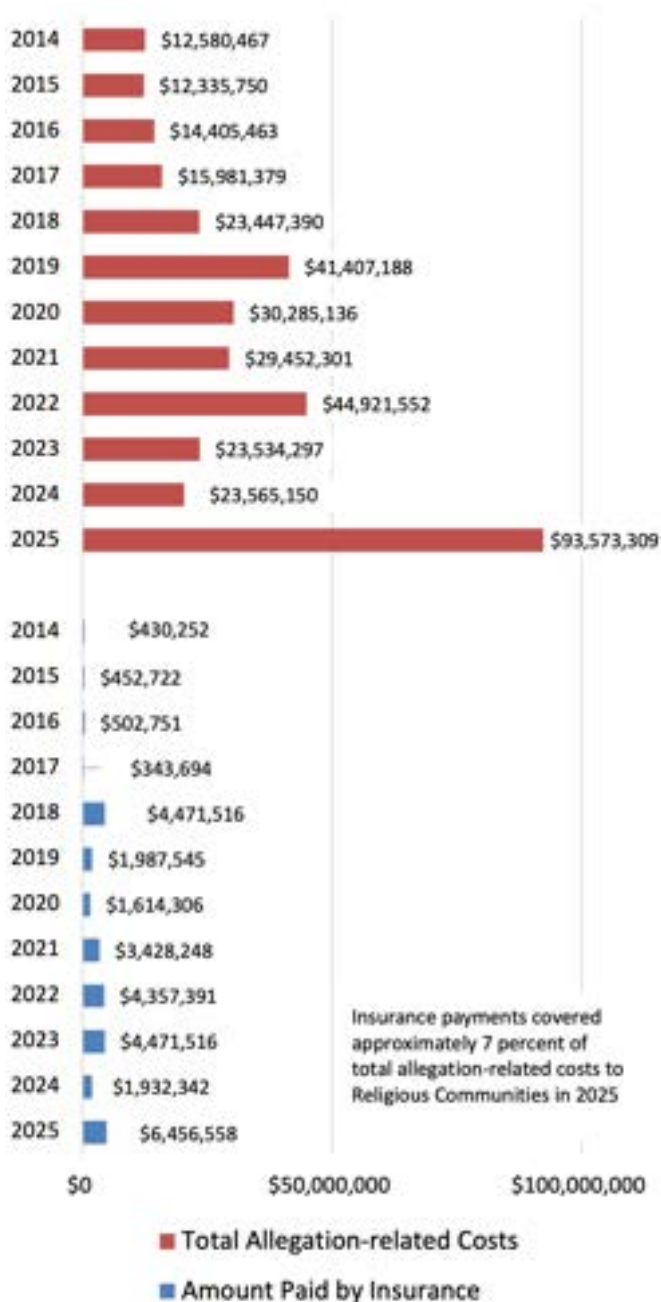


Religious communities that responded to the question reported that 6.9 percent of the total costs related to allegations between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 were covered by religious communities’ insurance. Figure 30 displays the total allegation-related costs paid by religious communities for reporting years 2014 to 2025 as well as the costs that

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were covered by insurance, which this fiscal year amounted to \$6,456,558. The percentage covered by insurance in year 2025 (7 percent) was about the same as the percentage in year 2024 (8 percent).

Figure 30. Total Allegation-related Costs and the Costs Paid by Insurance: Religious Communities

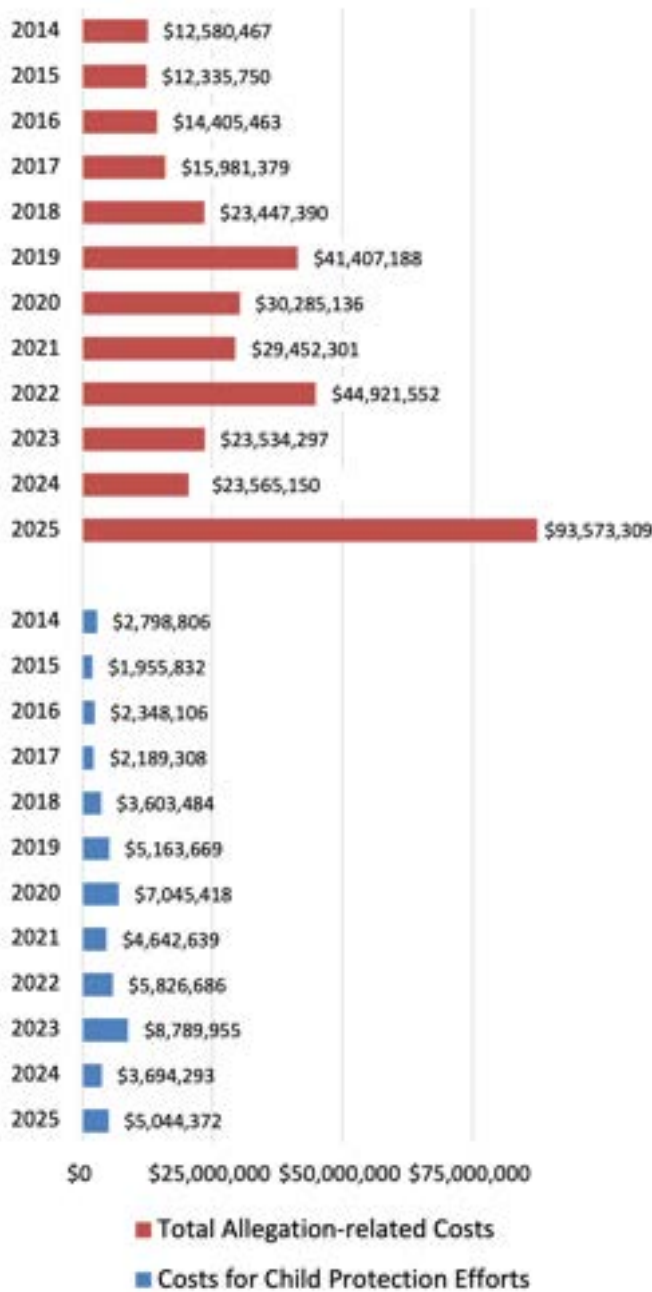


Thirty-two religious communities that had made a financial settlement to victims in the past audit year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025) responded to a series of questions concerning what monetary sources or changes were used to pay for those settlements. The sources they indicated include insurance pay-outs (41 percent or 13 religious communities), elimination of programs or services (6 percent or two religious communities), staff reductions (6 percent or two religious communities), restructuring of debt (3 percent or one religious community), and sale of property (3 percent or one religious community).

Twenty-six responding religious communities wrote in an “other” source, including: their investments (ten communities), their cash reserves and savings (five communities), their general operating budget (two communities), and an assessment of their communities (one community).

In addition to allegation-related expenses, religious communities spent about \$5 million (\$5,044,372) for child protection efforts between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, such as for training programs and background checks. This is a 37 percent increase compared to the \$3,694,293 reported spent on child protection efforts in year 2024. Figure 31 compares the settlement-related costs and child protection expenditures paid by religious communities in audit years 2014 through 2025.

Figure 31. Total Allegation-related Costs and Costs for Child Protection Efforts: Religious Communities

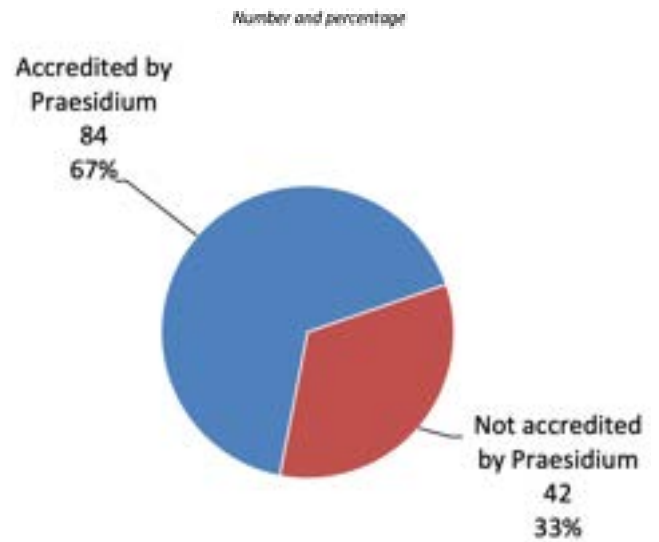


Altogether, religious communities reported \$98,617,681 in total costs related to child protection efforts as well as all costs related to allegations that were paid between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, a 262 percent increase from the \$27,259,443 combined total reported by religious communities last year.

Accreditation and Members Who Are Survivors of Minor Sexual Abuse

Figure 32 below shows that two-thirds of all responding religious communities (67 percent) are accredited by Praesidium.¹⁵ This is about the same as the 68 percent of responding religious communities saying they were accredited by Praesidium in fiscal year 2024.

Figure 32. Jurisdictions Presently Accredited by Praesidium: Religious Communities



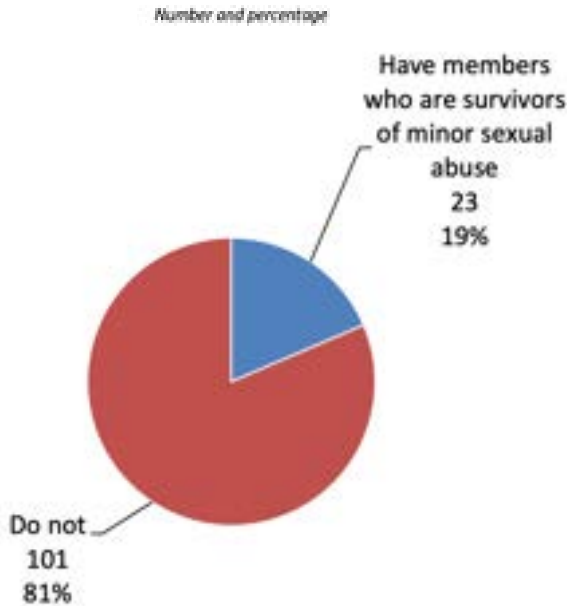
Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

Figure 33 presents the findings for whether a religious community has any members of their jurisdiction that have disclosed to leadership or to their local community that they are survivors of minor sexual abuse. Among the 124 responding communities, 19 percent report having such members.¹⁶ This is slightly higher than the 16 percent of religious communities in fiscal year 2024 who say they have such members.

¹⁵ Seven percent did not provide a response to this question.

¹⁶ Nine percent did not provide a response to this question.

Figure 33. Religious Communities with Members Who Are Survivors of Minor Sexual Abuse



Source: 2025 Survey of Allegations and Costs

These religious communities altogether report having 40 members that fit that description (not shown in the figure above).¹⁷

TOTAL COMBINED RESPONSES OF DIOCESES, EPARCHIES, AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Tables 5, 6, and 7 present the combined total responses of dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities. These tables depict the total number of allegations, victims, offenders, and costs as reported by these groups for the period between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities combined deemed as credible 156 allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by a diocesan, eparchial, or religious priest, brother, or deacon. These allegations were made by 155 individuals against 123 priests, religious brothers, or deacons.¹⁸ Sixty-four percent (79 priests, religious brothers

or deacons) of these alleged offenders had credible allegations made against them in previous years' surveys. Of the 156 reported new allegations, 3 (or 2 percent) are allegations that are reported to have occurred since calendar year 2000.

Table 5. New Allegations Deemed Credible in FY 2025: Combined Totals

	Victims	Allegations	Offenders
FY 2025	155	156	123
FY 2024	161	162	123
FY 2023	340	342	213
FY 2022	385	394	344
FY 2021	1,219	1,220	811
FY 2020	1,912	1,922	1,345

Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2020-2025

Cumulative View of Year the Alleged Offenses Occurred or Began - 2004 to 2025

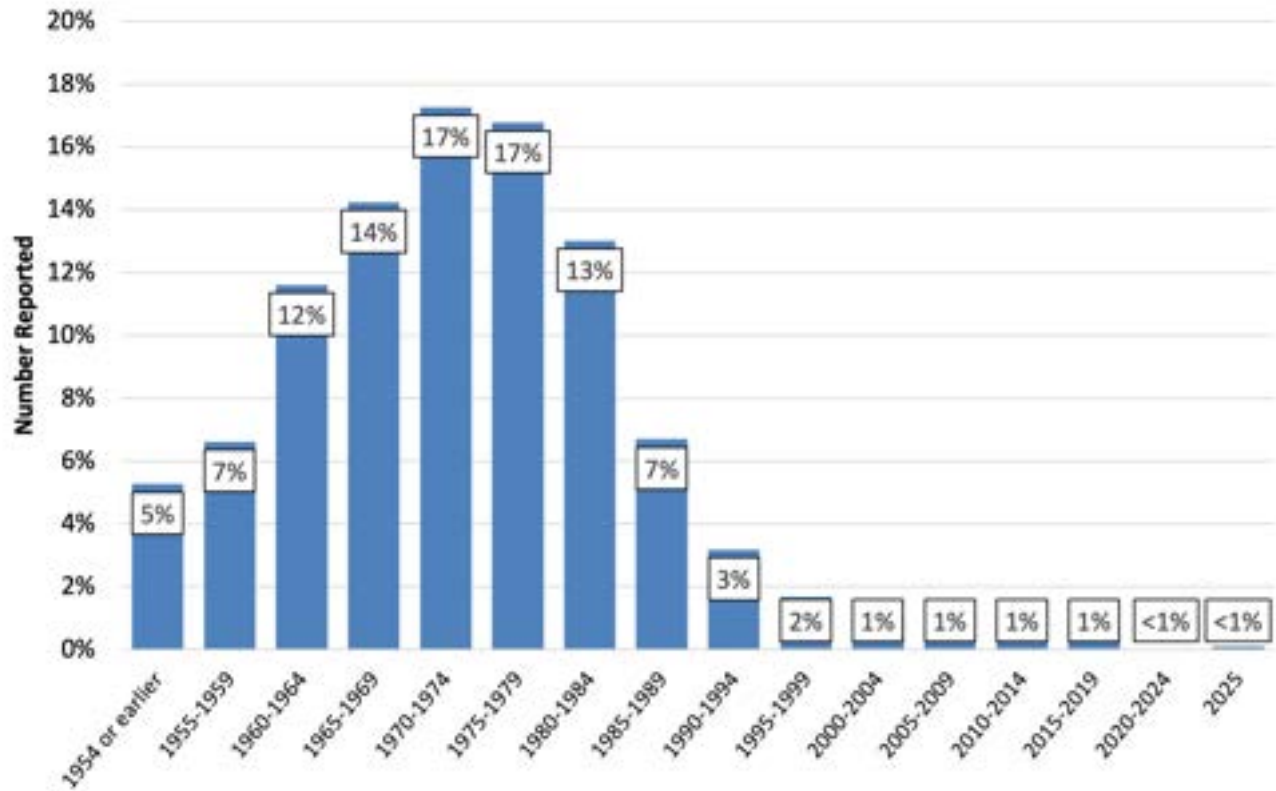
Using data that CARA has been collecting from dioceses, eparchies and religious communities since 2004, Figure 34 presents the period that each alleged offense occurred or began for all data collected from 2004 to 2025.¹⁹ Of necessity, the figure only displays those allegations for which the year the alleged offenses occurred or began was known. As can be seen, 55 percent of cumulative credible allegations occurred or began before 1975, 41 percent occurred or began between 1975 and 1999, and 4 percent began or occurred since 2000.

¹⁷ Three of the 23 who responded affirmatively did *not* write in a number to respond to this question.

¹⁸ As was mentioned in the Introduction, this year's survey is the sixth to collect details about all allegations that were deemed credible during this past fiscal year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025) regardless of when they were first reported to the arch/diocese, eparchy, or religious community.

¹⁹ As the data collection periods for dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities changed from a calendar year period for the 2004 to 2013 surveys to a fiscal year calendar of July 1 to June 30 for the 2014 to 2025 surveys, there is some double counting during the years 2013 and 2014. Any over count would have a negligible effect on this analysis.

Figure 34. Year Alleged Offenses Occurred or Began Cumulatively for 2004-2025: Dioceses, Eparchies and Religious Communities



Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2004 to 2025

Among all new credible allegations reported by dioceses/eparchies and religious communities to CARA from 2004 to 2025:

- 12 percent occurred or began in 1959 or earlier
- 26 percent occurred or began in the 1960s
- 34 percent occurred or began in the 1970s
- 20 percent occurred or began in the 1980s
- 5 percent occurred or began in the 1990s
- 2 percent occurred or began in the 2000s
- 1 percent occurred or began in the 2010s
- Less than 1 percent occurred or began between 2020 and 2025

Combined Costs Related to Allegations for 2025

Dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities reported paying out \$483,534,316 for costs related to allegations between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, an 82 percent increase from last year’s total of \$266,364,551. As with previous years’ surveys, this includes payments for allegations reported in previous years. Table 6 presents the payments across five categories of allegation-related expenses.

Table 6. Costs Related to Allegations: Combined Totals

	Settlements	Other Payments to Victims	Support for Offenders	Attorneys' Fees	Other Costs	GRAND TOTAL
FY 2014	\$62,938,073	\$7,747,097	\$15,403,047	\$28,774,518	\$4,216,912	\$119,079,647
FY 2015	\$92,518,869	\$9,092,443	\$14,008,052	\$33,740,768	\$4,259,412	\$153,619,544
FY 2016	\$60,379,857	\$24,682,229	\$14,243,119	\$39,887,737	\$2,126,859	\$141,319,801
FY 2017	\$168,788,491	\$10,571,817	\$13,026,662	\$33,009,846	\$3,559,859	\$228,956,675
FY 2018	\$194,346,291	\$7,317,904	\$23,366,845	\$30,517,658	\$7,070,839	\$262,619,537
FY 2019	\$231,094,438	\$16,821,854	\$15,648,822	\$49,194,220	\$10,259,671	\$323,019,005
FY 2020	\$234,628,082	\$13,199,500	\$16,687,141	\$65,990,338	\$11,760,741	\$342,265,802
FY 2021	\$133,576,106	\$13,485,315	\$14,175,821	\$54,380,179	\$7,955,098	\$223,572,519
FY 2022	\$126,672,066	\$7,354,291	\$13,901,232	\$49,405,978	\$4,640,128	\$201,973,695
FY 2023	\$203,209,612	\$7,480,788	\$10,968,263	\$57,289,157	\$5,096,005	\$284,043,825
FY 2024	\$173,124,902	\$6,493,540	\$10,668,295	\$71,825,766	\$4,252,048	\$266,364,551
FY 2025	\$345,840,624	\$6,691,810	\$20,509,350	\$98,318,211	\$12,174,321	\$483,534,316
Change (+/-) 2024-2025	\$172,715,722	\$198,270	\$9,841,055	\$26,492,445	\$7,922,273	\$217,169,765
Percentage Change	100%	3%	92%	37%	186%	82%

Sources: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2014-2025

Over seven-tenths of the costs (72 percent) were for settlements to victims. Attorneys’ fees accounted for an additional 20 percent. Support for offenders (including therapy, living expenses, legal expenses) amounted to 4 percent of these payments. An additional 1 percent were for other payments to victims that were not included in any settlement. A final 3 percent of payments were for “other” allegation-related costs.²⁰

Combined Costs Related to Child Protection Efforts and Allegations

Dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities paid \$36,853,017 for child protection efforts between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. This is a 1 percent increase from the amount spent on such child protection efforts in the previous reporting year (\$36,558,695). Dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities expended a total of \$483,534,316 for costs related to allegations between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Table 7 presents the combined allegation-related costs and child protection expenditures paid by dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities.

²⁰ These allegation-related costs are not evenly distributed among dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities. The five dioceses and two religious communities with the greatest total costs related to allegations account for 62 percent of all costs related to allegations (more than \$299 million). In contrast, 109 dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities report having no allegation-related costs (33 percent) for fiscal year 2025.

Table 7. Costs Related to Child Protection Efforts and to Allegations: Combined Totals

	Total Amounts for All Child Protection Efforts, Including SEC/VAC Salaries and Expenses, Training Programs, Background Checks, etc.	Total Costs Related to Allegations	TOTAL
FY 2014	\$31,667,740	\$119,079,647	\$150,747,387
FY 2015	\$33,489,404	\$153,539,897	\$187,029,301
FY 2016	\$34,850,246	\$141,319,801	\$176,170,047
FY 2017	\$34,852,598	\$228,956,675	\$263,809,273
FY 2018	\$39,290,069	\$262,619,537	\$301,909,606
FY 2019	\$44,935,299	\$323,019,005	\$367,954,304
FY 2020	\$51,461,507	\$342,265,802	\$393,727,309
FY 2021	\$38,584,773	\$223,572,519	\$262,157,292
FY 2022	\$41,877,846	\$201,973,695	\$243,851,541
FY 2023	\$43,747,179	\$284,043,825	\$327,791,004
FY 2024	\$36,558,695	\$266,364,551	\$302,923,246
FY 2025	\$36,853,017	\$483,534,316	\$520,387,333
Change (+/-) 2023-2025	\$294,322	\$217,169,765	\$217,464,087
Percentage Change	1%	82%	72%

Source: Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs, 2014-2025

Altogether, dioceses, eparchies, and religious communities reported \$520,387,333 in total costs related to child protection efforts as well as costs related to allegations that were paid between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. This represents a 72 percent increase from the \$302,923,246 total reported for year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024).



Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSE FREQUENCIES FOR DIOCESES AND EPARCHIES

This questionnaire is designed to survey dioceses and eparchies about accusations of abuse of minors by clergy and the costs in dealing with these allegations. The results will be used to demonstrate progress in implementing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and to reduce the incidence of sexual abuse within the Church.

All data collected here are entirely confidential. Only CARA personnel view the data submissions. Your individual data submission is not shared with anyone, including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Only combined, aggregated results for Dioceses and Eparchies nationally will be reported publicly.

Soon after submitting the report of findings to the USCCB for review, CARA removes from its data sets all identifying information about the Diocese or Eparchy submitting the data and stores it – encrypted using 256-bit AES encryption – on a secure platform at Georgetown University.

THE CURRENT AUDIT YEAR COVERS JULY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2025.

NOTE: An allegation is defined as one victim alleging an act or acts of abuse by one alleged perpetrator. Only allegations of abuse of a minor by diocesan or eparchial priests and deacons should be reported in this survey. Clergy who are members of a religious community should not be included in this survey.

STATUS OF ALLEGATIONS NOT RESOLVED IN THE PREVIOUS AUDIT YEAR

Reviewing your survey submission from last year (submitted in Fall/Winter 2024), please provide an update for those allegations classified as “investigation ongoing” on that survey (item A4 and item 5). Please designate the current status of those allegations using the categories below. *Please skip items A1 to A4 and proceed to item 1 if: (a) you had no allegations categorized as “investigation ongoing” on last year’s survey submission, or (b) you do not have access to the information submitted last year.*

- 61 A1. **Credible** – such as an allegation categorized as “substantiated” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., the investigation is complete and the allegation has been deemed credible/true based on the evidence gathered through the investigation; determined to bear the “semblance of truth” (i.e., has been sufficiently substantiated by a preliminary investigation to be forwarded to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith for action according to Canons 1717 and 1719); in the case of an allegation against a deceased perpetrator, the allegation is credible if it meets the criteria for forwarding to the Congregation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 36 A2. **Unsubstantiated** – such as an allegation categorized as “unsubstantiated” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., the investigation is complete and the allegation has been deemed not credible/false based on the evidence gathered through the investigation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 150 A3. **Unable to be proven** – such as an allegation categorized as “unable to be proven” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., enough information was available to initiate a preliminary investigation, but information remained limited and a determination of credible or unsubstantiated could not be made. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 1,339 A4. **Investigation ongoing** – such as an allegation categorized as “investigation ongoing” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., your diocese/eparchy has started an investigation, but has not yet completed it and has not yet determined credibility; also included here are those allegations – during some investigations conducted by civil authorities – where dioceses and eparchies temporarily are not permitted to conduct their own investigation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*

(Note: The sum of items A1 to A4 should be equal to the total number of allegations carried over from last year as they were categorized as “investigation ongoing” – the sum of items A4 and 5 on last year’s survey.)

**STATUS OF ALLEGATIONS FIRST RECEIVED DURING THIS AUDIT YEAR
(JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025)**

For item 1, please include all allegations that have been received by your diocese/eparchy since July 1, 2024. This includes any allegation with enough basic information that would prompt the initiation of a preliminary investigation (such as a name, location, approximate year, general description of alleged offense...). Do NOT include allegations that lack this basic information necessary to even begin to investigate. This should not include clergy that are members of religious communities as they will be reported by their religious institutes.

If no new allegations were first received during this audit year, please enter a “0” in item 1, leave items 2 to 5 blank, and proceed to item 6.

813 1. The total number of all new allegations your diocese or eparchy received between **July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025** – those allegations that are credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, or still being actively investigated. Also, allegations that lack the essential information required for an investigation (such as those in a class action suit that do not specify an alleged perpetrator and/or do not contain any information about alleged abuse) should not be included in item 1.

Of the total number reported in item 1, please designate the status of all allegations *first* received during this audit year (between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025):

- 56 2. **Credible** – such as an allegation categorized as “substantiated” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., the investigation is complete and the allegation has been deemed credible/true based on the evidence gathered through the investigation; determined to bear the “semblance of truth” (i.e., has been sufficiently substantiated by a preliminary investigation to be forwarded to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith for action according to Canons 1717 and 1719); in the case of an allegation against a deceased perpetrator, the allegation is credible if it meets the criteria for forwarding to the Congregation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 38 3. **Unsubstantiated** – such as an allegation categorized as “unsubstantiated” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., the investigation is complete and the allegation has been deemed not credible/false based on the evidence gathered through the investigation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 300 4. **Unable to be proven** – such as an allegation categorized as “unable to be proven” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., enough information was available to initiate a preliminary investigation, but information remained limited and a determination of credible or unsubstantiated could not be made. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 419 5. **Investigation ongoing** – such as an allegation categorized as “investigation ongoing” in your StoneBridge audit, i.e., your diocese/eparchy has started an investigation, but has not yet completed it and has not yet determined credibility; also included here are those allegations – during some investigations conducted by civil authorities – where dioceses and eparchies temporarily are not permitted to conduct their own investigation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*

(Note: The sum of items 2 to 5 should be equal to item 1.)

ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

If you have reported “0” on item 6, write “0” in item 39, leave items 40-53 blank, and proceed to item 54.

NOTE: Include any alleged perpetrators who are or were ordained members of the clergy (priests or deacons) legitimately serving in or assigned to your diocese or eparchy at the time the credible allegation was alleged to have occurred. Include only those clergy who are tied to the allegations reported in item 6 above. Do not include clergy who are members of religious communities as they will be reported by their religious institutes.

89 39. Total number of priests or deacons against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been reported or recorded between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. *(Note: Include all clergy tied to the allegations reported in item 6.) (If your response to item 39 is zero, please leave items 40 to 53 blank and go to item 54.)*

66 40. Of the total number in item 39, the number that have had one or more previous credible allegations reported against them in previous surveys.

Of the total number in item 39, how many were in each category below at the time of the alleged abuse?

Choose only one category for each alleged perpetrator.

- 79 41. Diocesan priests ordained for this diocese or eparchy.
- 3 42. Diocesan priests incardinated later in this diocese or eparchy.
- 2 43. Extern diocesan priests from another U.S. diocese serving in this diocese or eparchy.
- 1 44. Extern diocesan priests from a diocese outside the United States serving in this diocese or eparchy.
- 1 45. Permanent deacons.
- 0 46. Unnamed or unspecified clergy member.
- 3 47 Other: _____.

(The sum of items 41-47 should equal item 39.)

Of the total number in item 39, the number that:

Choose only one category for each alleged perpetrator.

- 78 48. Are deceased, already removed from ministry, already laicized, or missing.
- 10 49. Have been permanently removed or retired from ministry between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 based on allegations of abuse.
- 0 50. Have been returned to ministry between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 based on the resolution of allegations of abuse.
- 0 51. Remain temporarily removed from ministry pending investigation of allegations (as of June 30, 2025).
- 0 52. Remain in active ministry pending investigation of allegations (as of June 30, 2025).
- 1 53. Unnamed or unspecified clergy member.

(The sum of items 48-53 should equal item 39.)

COSTS INCURRED DURING THE CURRENT AUDIT YEAR (JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025)

\$31,808,645 54. Excluding all payments or costs related to any specific allegations, amounts paid for **all child protection efforts** – including Safe Environment Coordinators/Victim Assistance Coordinators salaries and expenses, training programs, background checks – during this audit year (between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025).

Indicate the approximate total amount of funds expended by your diocese or eparchy between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 for **payments as the result of allegations of sexual abuse of a minor** (notwithstanding the year in which the allegation was received):

\$276,059,424 55. All settlements paid to victims.

\$6,286,865 56. Other payments to victims (e.g., for therapy or other expenses, if separate from settlements).

\$7,362,524 57. Payments for support for alleged offenders (including living expenses, legal expenses, therapy, etc.).

\$88,943,508 58. Payments for attorneys’ fees.

\$11,408,686 59. Other allegation-related costs. Please describe below:

14.39% 60. Approximate percentage of the total amount in items 55-59 that was covered by your diocese’s or eparchy’s insurance.

If your diocese or eparchy made a financial settlement to victims during the past audit year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), which of the following monetary sources/changes did your diocese or eparchy use for those settlements:

(Please check all that apply. If no financial settlements were made, please skip these questions.)

4 61. Sale of property.

6 62. Restructuring of debt.

20 63. Insurance pay-outs.

2 64. Bankruptcy filing.

0 65. Elimination of programs or services.

0 66. Staff reductions.

38 67. Other, please describe here: _____.

In the event it is necessary for clarification about the data reported here, please supply the following information:

Name of person completing this form: _____

Title of person completing this form: _____

Arch/Diocese or Eparchy: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you for completing this survey.

You can send, scan and email, or fax this survey to Jon Wiggins at:

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA); 2300 Wisconsin Ave NW, Suite 400A, Washington, DC 20007

Phone: 202-687-1290 Fax: 202-687-8083 E-mail: jlw8@georgetown.edu; ©CARA 2025, All rights reserved.



CARA – Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
Annual Survey of Allegations and Costs – Religious Communities

Appendix II

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSE FREQUENCIES FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

This questionnaire is designed to survey Major Superiors of Men who lead and govern Religious Communities – Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life, and Independent Monasteries – about accusations of abuse of minors by their members and the costs in dealing with these allegations. The results will be used to demonstrate progress in implementing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and to reduce the incidence of sexual abuse within the Church.

All data collected here are entirely confidential. Only CARA personnel view the data submissions. Your individual data submission is not shared with anyone, including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), any individual bishop, or the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. Only combined, aggregated results for Religious Communities nationally will be reported publicly.

Soon after submitting the report of findings to the USCCB and CMSM for review, CARA removes from its data sets all identifying information about the Religious Community submitting the data and stores it – encrypted using 256-bit AES encryption – on a secure platform at Georgetown University.

THE CURRENT AUDIT YEAR COVERS JULY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2025.

NOTE: An allegation is defined as one victim alleging an act or acts of abuse by one alleged perpetrator. Only allegations of abuse of a minor by a Religious Community member (priests, deacons, and brothers) should be reported in this survey.

STATUS OF ALLEGATIONS NOT RESOLVED IN THE PREVIOUS AUDIT YEAR

Reviewing your survey submission from last year (submitted in Fall/Winter 2024), please provide an update for those allegations classified as “investigation ongoing” on that survey (item A4 and item 5). Please designate the current status of those allegations using the categories below. Please skip items A1 to A4 and proceed to item 1 if: (a) you had no allegations categorized as “investigation ongoing” on last year’s survey, or (b) you do not have access to the information submitted last year. **NR=0**

- 22 A1. **Credible** – determined to bear the “semblance of truth” (i.e., has been sufficiently substantiated by a preliminary investigation to be forwarded to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith for action according to Canons 1717 and 1719); in the case of an allegation against a deceased alleged perpetrator, the allegation is credible if it meets the criteria for forwarding to the Congregation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 7 A2. **Unsubstantiated** – determined by a preliminary investigation that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that the allegation occurred as claimed. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 61 A3. **Unable to be proven** – enough information was available to initiate a preliminary investigation, but information remained limited and a determination of credible or unsubstantiated could not be made. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*
- 383 A4. **Investigation ongoing** – the preliminary investigation is still underway or awaiting final determination of credibility; also included here are those allegations – during some investigations conducted by civil authorities – where Religious Communities temporarily are not permitted to conduct their own investigation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.*

(Note: The sum of items A1 to A4 should be equal to the total number of allegations carried over from last year that were categorized as “investigation ongoing” – the sum of items A4 and 5 on last year’s survey.)

2025 Annual Report: Findings and Recommendations

STATUS OF ALLEGATIONS FIRST RECEIVED DURING THIS AUDIT YEAR (JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025)

For item 1, please include all allegations that have been received by your Religious Community since July 1, 2024. This includes any allegation with enough basic information that would prompt the initiation of a preliminary investigation (such as a name, location, approximate year, general description of alleged offense...). Do NOT include allegations that lack this basic information necessary to even begin to investigate.

If no new allegations were first received during this audit year, please enter a “0” in item 1, leave items 2 to 5 blank, and proceed to item 6.

125 1. The total number of all new allegations your Religious Community received between **July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025** – those allegations that are credible, unsubstantiated, unable to be proven, or still being actively investigated. Allegations that lack the essential information required for an investigation (such as those in a class action suit that do not specify an alleged perpetrator and/or do not contain any information about alleged abuse) should not be included in item 1. **NR=0**

Of the total number reported in item 1, please designate the status of all allegations *first* received during this audit year (between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025):

- 17 2. **Credible** – determined to bear the “semblance of truth” (i.e., has been sufficiently substantiated by a preliminary investigation to be forwarded to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith for action according to Canons 1717 and 1719); in the case of an allegation against a deceased alleged perpetrator, the allegation is credible if it meets the criteria for forwarding to the Congregation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.* **NR=0**
- 10 3. **Unsubstantiated** – determined by a preliminary investigation that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that the allegation occurred as claimed. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.* **NR=0**
- 27 4. **Unable to be proven** – enough information was available to initiate a preliminary investigation, but information remained limited and a determination of credible or unsubstantiated could not be made. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.* **NR=0**
- 71 5. **Investigation ongoing** – the preliminary investigation is still underway or awaiting final determination of credibility; also included here are those allegations – during some investigations conducted by civil authorities – where Religious Communities temporarily are not permitted to conduct their own investigation. *These allegations may or may not have been paid out in a settlement.* **NR=0**

(Note: The sum of items 2 to 5 should be equal to item 1.)

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Religious Communities 2025

ALL ALLEGATIONS DEEMED CREDIBLE DURING THIS AUDIT YEAR (JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025)

39 6. Total number of allegations designated as credible during this audit period (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025). (*Note: Item 6 = Item A1 + Item 2.*) (*If your response to item 6 is zero, please respond "0" to items 6a and 6b, leave items 7 to 38 blank, and proceed to item 39.*) *NR=0*

1 6a. Of the allegations in item 6, the number that only involved child pornography (child pornography is any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor – those less than 18 years old). *NR=0*

38 6b. Of the allegations in item 6, the number that involved other forms of sexual abuse. (*Item 6 minus item 6a.*) *NR=0*

Of the number reported in item 6, the number that were first reported to your Religious Community by a(n): *NR=0*

9 7. Victim.

1 8. Family member of the victim.

0 9. Friend of the victim.

25 10. Attorney of the victim.

0 11. Law enforcement.

3 12. Bishop or official from a diocese.

0 13. Reported through a government investigation.

1 14. Other sources: _____.

(Choose only one category for each allegation. The sum of items 7-14 should equal item 6.)

Of the number reported in item 6b, the number of alleged victims that are: *NR=0*

30 15. Male.

6 16. Female.

2 17. Gender unknown.

(Choose only one category for each allegation. The sum of items 15-17 should equal item 6b.)

Of the number reported in item 6b, the number of alleged victims in each age category when the alleged abuse began: *NR=0*

4 18. 0-9.

16 20. 15-17.

15 19. 10-14.

3 21. Age unknown.

(Choose only one category for each allegation. The sum of items 18-21 should equal item 6b.)

Of the number reported in item 6b, the number alleged to have begun in: *NR=0*

1 22. 1954 or earlier.

0 31. 1995-1999.

0 23. 1955-1959.

0 32. 2000-2004.

4 24. 1960-1964.

0 33. 2005-2009.

1 25. 1965-1969.

0 34. 2010-2014.

11 26. 1970-1974.

0 35. 2015-2019.

4 27. 1975-1979.

0 36. 2020-2024.

6 28. 1980-1984.

0 37. 2025.

7 29. 1985-1989.

3 38. Time period unknown.

1 30. 1990-1994.

(Choose only one category for each allegation. The sum of items 22-38 should equal item 6b.)

ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

If you are reporting “0” on item 6 then write “0” in item 39, leave items 40-59 blank, and proceed to item 60.

NOTE: Include any alleged perpetrators who are or were members who legitimately served within your Religious Community or were in or assigned to a diocese or eparchy at the time the credible allegation was alleged to have occurred. Include only those members who are tied to the allegations reported in item 6 above.

34 39. Total number of members against whom credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been reported or recorded between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. *(Note: Include all members tied to the allegations reported in item 6.)*
(If your response to item 39 is zero, please leave items 40 to 59 blank and proceed to item 60.)

13 40. Of the total number in item 39, the number that have had one or more previous credible allegations reported against them in previous surveys.

Of the total number in item 39, how many were in each category below at the time of the alleged abuse?

(Choose only one category for each alleged perpetrator. The sum of items 41-47 should equal item 39.)

Priests or

Deacons

Brothers

- | | | |
|---------|--------|---|
| 18 41a. | 2 41b. | Member of your canonical jurisdiction assigned within the United States. |
| 0 42a. | 1 42b. | Member of your canonical jurisdiction assigned outside the United States. |
| 1 43a. | 1 43b. | Formerly of your canonical jurisdiction but no longer a member of your Religious Community. |
| 0 44a. | 0 44b. | Member of another U.S. canonical jurisdiction but serving in your canonical jurisdiction. |
| 1 45a. | 0 45b. | Member of a non-U.S. based canonical jurisdiction but serving in your canonical jurisdiction. |
| 0 46. | | Deacon member of your Religious Community. |
| 10 47. | | Unnamed or unspecified member. |

(The sum of items 41-47 should equal item 39.)

Of the total number in item 39, the number that:

(Choose only one category for each alleged perpetrator. The sum of items 48-53 should equal item 39.)

- 21 48. Are deceased, already removed from ministry, already laicized, or missing.
- 3 49. Have been permanently removed or retired from ministry between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 based on allegations of abuse.
- 0 50. Have been returned to ministry between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 based on the resolution of allegations of abuse.
- 0 51. Remain temporarily removed from ministry pending investigation of allegations (as of June 30, 2024).
- 0 52. Remain in active ministry pending investigation of allegations (as of June 30, 2025).
- 10 53. Unnamed or unspecified member.

(The sum of items 48-53 should equal item 39.)

Of the number reported in item 39, the number that: **NR=6**

- 3 54. Are diagnosed as or fits the pattern for situational offenders (Situational offenders end up molesting the child for various reasons – most often because of availability – whether male or female – but do NOT have a preference for pre-pubescent children. They may feel attracted to the child or stimulated by being “close” to them. Situational offenders often have low self-worth, poor peer relationships, cannot deal with stress well and take advantage of the child as the result of the extra pressure at a particular time in their life. Their offending behavior is sporadic or occurs only once, and may be triggered by a loss, e.g., death of a family member, friend, etc. Typically, there are fewer victims than for the Preferential Type.)

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Religious Communities 2025

- 7 55. Are diagnosed as or fits the pattern for preferential offenders (Preferential offenders are most often “pedophiles,” who prefer and seek out jobs or ministries with pre-pubescent children, are aroused by child porn, often may have multiple to many victims, tend to abuse males only, think more of their needs than any fear of being caught, and engage in more deviant behavior patterns.)
- 14 56. Not known, have not yet received a diagnosis, or do not fit a pattern (Data from perpetrator records is unclear to distinguish any type. One cannot clearly distinguish between situational factors and preferential factors to determine the type based on available observation or knowledge.)
(The sum of items 54-56 should equal item 39.)
- 3 57. Of the total number of situational offenders reported in item 54, the number who you have identified as having previously offended.
- 7 58. Of the total number of preferential offenders reported in item 55, the number who you have identified as having previously offended.
- 14 59. Of the total number of undiagnosed offenders reported in item 56, the number who have you have identified as having previously offended.

Yes No NR

- 84 42 7 60. Is your jurisdiction presently accredited by Praesidium?
- 23 101 9 61. Have any members of your jurisdiction disclosed (to leadership and/or to their local community) that they are survivors of minor sexual abuse?
61a. If yes, approximately how many members have disclosed: __members **Total=40**

COSTS INCURRED DURING THE CURRENT AUDIT YEAR (JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025)

- \$5,044,372 62. Excluding all payments or costs related to any specific allegations, amounts paid for **all child protection efforts**, including Safe Environment Coordinators/Victim Assistance Coordinators salaries and expenses, training programs, background checks, during this audit year, between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Costs that should be included in these efforts include staff time, superior’s time, and provincial or council’s time (time is money – they are billable in any other setting – typically \$25-50 dollars an hour), any salaries/contracts/consultations of internal or external personnel, professional updating and costs associated with these efforts/events. It also includes:
1. Travel, room and board, time away from central governance office(s), associated with Trainings, Safeguarding Ministry Conference, National Assembly where updates are given on all national efforts.
 2. Education programs: costs of programs, set up costs, travel costs, time of all members at sessions.
 3. Administrative costs: Praesidium fee, costs related to Review Board, consultancies.

Indicate the approximate total amount of funds expended by your Religious Community between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 for **payments as the result of allegations of sexual abuse of a minor** (notwithstanding the year in which the allegation was received):

- \$69,781,200 63. All settlements paid to victims.
- \$404,945 64. Other payments or services related to the victims (including therapy costs or behavioral health care costs, if separate from settlements).
- \$13,146,826 65. Payments for support for and monitoring of alleged offenders with credible allegations (including costs associated with the welfare and care of the accused: safety plan supervision; yearly room and board; health care costs; behavioral health care costs; insurance costs; budget/spending money; therapy).
- \$9,474,703 66. Payments for attorneys’ fees.
- \$765,635 67. Other allegation-related costs. Please describe these costs below:
- 7% 68. Approximate percentage of the total amount in items 63-67 that was covered by your Religious Community’s insurance.

2025 Annual Report: Findings and Recommendations

If your Religious Community made a financial settlement to victims during the past audit year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), which of the following monetary sources/changes did your Religious Community use for those settlements:

(Please check all that apply. If no financial settlements were made, please skip these questions.)

1 69. Sale of property.

1 70. Restructuring of debt.

13 71. Insurance pay-outs.

0 72. Bankruptcy filing.

2 73. Elimination of programs or services.

2 74. Staff reductions.

26 75. Other, please describe here: _____.

In the event it is necessary for clarification about the data reported here, please supply the following information for CARA's use: *(This identifying information will be removed before the data set is stored in an encrypted form on a secure platform at Georgetown University – the university with whom CARA is affiliated.)*

Name of person completing this form: _____

Title of person completing this form: _____

Religious Community: _____

Canonical Jurisdiction/Province: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you for completing this survey.

You can send or fax this survey to Jon Wiggins at:
Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)
2300 Wisconsin Ave NW, Suite 400A, Washington, DC 20007
Phone: 202-687-1290 Fax: 202-687-8083 E-mail: jlw8@georgetown.edu
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SECTION III

2025

The revised *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee for Sexual Abuse of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved by the full body of U.S. Catholic bishops at its June 2005 Plenary Assembly, and this third revision was approved at the June 2018 Plenary Assembly. The revised *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons* was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse of the USCCB and by the Vatican-U.S. Bishops' Mixed Commission on Sex Abuse Norms. They were approved by the full body of bishops at its June 2005 General Meeting, received the subsequent recognition of the Holy See on January 1, 2006, and were promulgated May 5, 2006. The revised *Statement of Episcopal Commitment* was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Bishops' Life and Ministry of the USCCB. It was approved by the full body of U.S. Catholic bishops at its November 2005 Plenary Assembly and then again in 2011 and 2018. This revised edition, containing all three documents, is authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield
General Secretary, USCCB

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CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (REVISED JUNE 2018)

PREAMBLE

Since 2002, the Church in the United States has experienced a crisis without precedent in our times. The sexual abuse¹ of children and young people by some deacons, priests, and bishops, and the ways in which these crimes and sins were addressed, have caused enormous pain, anger, and confusion for victims, their families, and the entire Church. As bishops, we have acknowledged our mistakes and our roles in that suffering, and we apologize and take responsibility again for too often failing victims and the Catholic people in the past. From the depths of our hearts, we bishops express great sorrow and profound regret for what the Catholic people have endured.

We share Pope Francis' "conviction that everything possible must be done to rid the Church of the scourge of the sexual abuse of minors and to open pathways of reconciliation and healing for those who were abused" (Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences and Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life Concerning the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, February 2, 2015).

Again, with this 2018 revision of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we re-affirm our deep commitment to sustain and strengthen a safe environment within the Church for children and youth. We have listened to the profound pain and suffering of those victimized by sexual abuse and will continue to respond to their cries. We have agonized over the sinfulness, the criminality, and the breach of trust perpetrated by some members of the clergy. We have determined as best we can the extent of the problem of this abuse of minors by clergy in our country, as well as its causes and context. We will use what we have learned to strengthen the protection given to the children and young people in our care.

We continue to have a special care for and a commitment to reaching out to the victims of sexual abuse and their families. The damage caused by sexual abuse of minors is devastating and long-lasting. We apologize to each victim for the grave harm that has been inflicted on him or her, and we

offer our help now and for the future. The loss of trust that is often the consequence of such abuse becomes even more tragic when it leads to a loss of the faith that we have a sacred duty to foster. We make our own the words of St. John Paul II: that the sexual abuse of young people is "by every standard wrong and rightly considered a crime by society; it is also an appalling sin in the eyes of God" (Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers, April 23, 2002). We will continue to help victims recover from these crimes and strive to prevent these tragedies from occurring.

Along with the victims and their families, the entire Catholic community in this country has suffered because of this scandal and its consequences. The intense public scrutiny of the minority of the ordained who have betrayed their calling has caused the vast majority of faithful priests and deacons to experience enormous vulnerability to being misunderstood in their ministry and often casts over them an undeserved air of suspicion. We share with all priests and deacons a firm commitment to renewing the integrity of the vocation to Holy Orders so that it will continue to be perceived as a life of service to others after the example of Christ our Lord.

We, who have been given the responsibility of shepherding God's people, will, with his help and in full collaboration with all the faithful, continue to work to restore the bonds of trust that unite us. We have seen that words alone cannot accomplish this goal. We will continue to take action in our Plenary Assembly and at home in our dioceses and eparchies.

We feel a particular responsibility for "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18) which God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, has given us. The love of Christ impels us to ask forgiveness for our own faults but also to appeal to all—to those who have been victimized, to those who have offended, and to all who have felt the wound of this scandal—to be reconciled to God and one another.

Perhaps in a way never before experienced, we feel the power of sin touch our entire Church family in this country; but as St. Paul boldly says, God made Christ "to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:21). May we who have known sin experience as well, through a spirit of reconciliation, God's

2025 Annual Report: Findings and Recommendations

own righteousness. We know that after such profound hurt, healing and reconciliation are beyond human capacity alone. It is God's grace and mercy that will lead us forward, trusting Christ's promise: "for God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

In working toward fulfilling this responsibility, we rely, first of all, on Almighty God to sustain us in faith and in the discernment of the right course to take.

We receive fraternal guidance and support from the Holy See that sustains us in this time of trial. In solidarity with Pope Francis, we express heartfelt love and sorrow for the victims of abuse.

We rely on the Catholic faithful of the United States. Nationally and in each diocese/eparchy, the wisdom and expertise of clergy, religious, and laity contribute immensely to confronting the effects of the crisis and taking steps to resolve it. We are filled with gratitude for their great faith, for their generosity, and for the spiritual and moral support that we receive from them.

We acknowledge and re-affirm the faithful service of the vast majority of our priests and deacons and the love that people have for them. They deservedly have our esteem and that of the Catholic people for their good work. It is regrettable that their committed ministerial witness has been overshadowed by this crisis.

In a special way, we acknowledge and thank victims of clergy sexual abuse and their families who have trusted us enough to share their stories and to help us understand more fully the consequences of this reprehensible violation of sacred trust. With Pope Francis, we praise the courage of those who speak out about their abuse; their actions are "a service of love, since for us it sheds light on a terrible darkness in the life of the Church." We pray that "the remnants of the darkness which touch them may be healed" (Address to Victims of Sexual Abuse, July 7, 2014).

Let there now be no doubt or confusion on anyone's part: For us, your bishops, our obligation to protect children and young people and to prevent sexual abuse flows from the mission and example given to us by Jesus Christ himself, in whose name we serve.

As we work to restore trust, we are reminded how Jesus showed constant care for the vulnerable. He inaugurated his ministry with these words of the Prophet Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Lk 4:18-19)

In Matthew 25, the Lord, in his commission to his apostles and disciples, told them that whenever they show mercy and compassion to the least ones, they show it to him.

Jesus extended this care in a tender and urgent way to children, rebuking his disciples for keeping them away from him: "Let the children come to me" (Mt 19:14). And he uttered a grave warning that for anyone who would lead the little ones astray, it would be better for such a person "to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Mt 18:6).

We hear these words of the Lord as prophetic for this moment. With a firm determination to restore the bonds of trust, we bishops recommit ourselves to a continual pastoral outreach to repair the breach with those who have suffered sexual abuse and with all the people of the Church.

In this spirit, over the last sixteen years, the principles and procedures of the *Charter* have been integrated into church life.

- The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection provides the focus for a consistent, ongoing, and comprehensive approach to creating a safe environment for young people throughout the Church in the United States.
- The Secretariat also provides the means for us to be accountable for achieving the goals of the *Charter*, as demonstrated by its annual reports on the implementation of the *Charter* based on independent compliance audits.
- The National Review Board is carrying on its responsibility to assist in the assessment of diocesan/eparchial compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
- The descriptive study of the nature and scope of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy in the United States, commissioned by the National Review Board, was completed in February 2004. The resulting study, examining the historical period 1950-2002, by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice provides us with a powerful tool not only to examine our past but also to secure our future against such misconduct.

- The U.S. bishops charged the National Review Board to oversee the completion of the *Causes and Context* study. The Study, which calls for ongoing education, situational prevention, and oversight and accountability, was completed in 2011.
- Victims' assistance coordinators are in place throughout our nation to assist dioceses and eparchies in responding to the pastoral needs of the abused.
- Diocesan/eparchial bishops in every diocese/eparchy are advised and greatly assisted by diocesan and eparchial review boards as the bishops make the decisions needed to fulfill the *Charter*.
- Safe environment programs are in place to assist parents and children—and those who work with children—in preventing harm to young people. These programs continually seek to incorporate the most useful developments in the field of child protection.

Through these steps and many others, we remain committed to the safety of our children and young people.

While the number of reported cases of sexual abuse has decreased over the last sixteen years, the harmful effects of this abuse continue to be experienced both by victims and dioceses/eparchies.

Thus it is with a vivid sense of the effort which is still needed to confront the effects of this crisis fully and with the wisdom gained by the experience of the last sixteen years that we have reviewed and revised the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. We now re-affirm that we will assist in the healing of those who have been injured, will do all in our power to protect children and young people, and will work with our clergy, religious, and laity to restore trust and harmony in our faith communities, as we pray for the Kingdom of God to come, here on earth, as it is in heaven.

To make effective our goals of a safe environment within the Church for children and young people and of preventing sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the future, we, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, have outlined in this *Charter* a series of practical and pastoral steps, and we commit ourselves to taking them in our dioceses and eparchies.

TO PROMOTE HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WITH VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

ARTICLE 1. Dioceses/eparchies are 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 the victims is for healing and reconciliation. Each diocese/eparchy is to continue its outreach to every person who has been the victim of sexual abuse as a minor by anyone in church service, whether the abuse was recent or occurred many years in the past. This outreach may include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the diocese/eparchy.

Through pastoral outreach to victims and their families, the diocesan/eparchial bishop or his representative is to offer to meet with them, to listen with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns, and to share the “profound sense of solidarity and concern” expressed by St. John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers (April 23, 2002). Pope Benedict XVI, too, in his address to the U.S. bishops in 2008 said of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, “It is your God-given responsibility as pastors to bind up the wounds caused by every breach of trust, to foster healing, to promote reconciliation and to reach out with loving concern to those so seriously wronged.”

We bishops and eparchs commit ourselves to work as one with our brother priests and deacons to foster reconciliation among all people in our dioceses/eparchies. We especially commit ourselves to work with those individuals who were themselves abused and the communities that have suffered because of the sexual abuse of minors that occurred in their midst.

ARTICLE 2. Dioceses/eparchies are to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. Dioceses/eparchies are to have a competent person or persons to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint are to be readily available in printed form and other media in the principal

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languages in which the liturgy is celebrated in the diocese/eparchy and be the subject of public announcements at least annually.

Dioceses/eparchies are also to have a review board that functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop/eparch. The majority of its members are to be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese/eparchy (see Norm 5 in *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, 2006). This board is to advise the diocesan/eparchial bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. It is regularly to review diocesan/eparchial policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. Also, the board can review these matters both retrospectively and prospectively and give advice on all aspects of responses in connection with these cases.

ARTICLE 3. Dioceses/eparchies are not to enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality, unless the victim/survivor requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement.

TO GUARANTEE AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

ARTICLE 4. Dioceses/eparchies are to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to the public authorities with due regard for the seal of the Sacrament of Penance. Diocesan/eparchial personnel are to comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the jurisdiction in question.

Dioceses/eparchies are to cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases even when the person is no longer a minor.

In every instance, dioceses/eparchies are to advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and support this right.

ARTICLE 5. We affirm the words of St. John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers: "There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young." Pope

Francis has consistently reiterated this with victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1). Because of the seriousness of this matter, jurisdiction has been reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, AAS 93, 2001). Sexual abuse of a minor is also a crime in all civil jurisdictions in the United States.

Diocesan/eparchial policy is to provide that for even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor—whenever it occurred—which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. In keeping with the stated purpose of this *Charter*, an offending priest or deacon is to be offered therapeutic professional assistance both for the purpose of prevention and also for his own healing and well-being.

The diocesan/eparchial bishop is to exercise his power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, to ensure that any priest or deacon subject to his governance who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described below (see notes) shall not continue in ministry.

A priest or deacon who is accused of sexual abuse of a minor is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect his reputation. He is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. If the allegation is deemed not substantiated, every step possible is to be taken to restore his good name, should it have been harmed.

In fulfilling this article, dioceses/eparchies are to follow the requirements of the universal law of the Church and of the *Essential Norms* approved for the United States.

ARTICLE 6. There are to be clear and well publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church with regard to their contact with minors.

ARTICLE 7. Dioceses/eparchies are to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors by clergy within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. This is especially so with regard to informing parish and other church communities directly affected by sexual abuse of a minor.

TO ENSURE THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF OUR PROCEDURES

ARTICLE 8. The Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People is a standing committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Its membership is to include representation from all the episcopal regions of the country, with new appointments staggered to maintain continuity in the effort to protect children and youth.

The Committee is to advise the USCCB on all matters related to child and youth protection and is to oversee the development of the plans, programs, and budget of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. It is to provide the USCCB with comprehensive planning and recommendations concerning child and youth protection by coordinating the efforts of the Secretariat and the National Review Board.

ARTICLE 9. The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, established by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, is to staff the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and be a resource for dioceses/eparchies for the implementation of “safe environment” programs and for suggested training and development of diocesan personnel responsible for child and youth protection programs, taking into account the financial and other resources, as well as the population, area, and demographics of the diocese/eparchy.

The Secretariat is to produce an annual public report on the progress made in implementing and maintaining the standards in this *Charter*. The report is to be based on an annual audit process whose method, scope, and cost are to be approved by the Administrative Committee on the recommendation of the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People. This public report is to include the names of those dioceses/eparchies which the audit shows are not in compliance with the provisions and expectations of the *Charter*. The audit method refers to the process and techniques used to determine compliance with the *Charter*. The audit scope relates to the focus, parameters, and time period for the matters to be examined during an individual audit.

As a member of the Conference staff, the Executive Director of the Secretariat is appointed by and reports to the General Secretary. The Executive Director is to provide the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People

and the National Review Board with regular reports of the Secretariat’s activities.

ARTICLE 10. The whole Church, at both the diocesan/eparchial and national levels, must be engaged in maintaining safe environments in the Church for children and young people.

The Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People is to be assisted by the National Review Board, a consultative body established in 2002 by the USCCB. The Board will review the annual report of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection on the implementation of this *Charter* in each diocese/eparchy and any recommendations that emerge from it, and offer its own assessment regarding its approval and publication to the Conference President.

The Board will also advise the Conference President on future members. The Board members are appointed by the Conference President in consultation with the Administrative Committee and are accountable to him and to the USCCB Executive Committee. Before a candidate is contacted, the Conference President is to seek and obtain, in writing, the endorsement of the candidate’s diocesan bishop. The Board is to operate in accord with the statutes and bylaws of the USCCB and within procedural guidelines developed by the Board in consultation with the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and approved by the USCCB Administrative Committee. These guidelines set forth such matters as the Board’s purpose and responsibility, officers, terms of office, and frequency of reports to the Conference President on its activities.

The Board will offer its advice as it collaborates with the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People on matters of child and youth protection, specifically on policies and best practices. For example, the Board will continue to monitor the recommendations derived from the *Causes and Context* study. The Board and Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People will meet jointly every year.

The Board will review the work of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and make recommendations to the Executive Director. It will assist the Executive Director in the development of resources for dioceses.

ARTICLE 11. The President of the Conference is to inform the Holy See of this revised *Charter* to indicate the manner in which we, the Catholic bishops, together with the entire Church in the United States, intend to continue our commitment to the protection of children and young people. The President is also to share with the Holy See the annual reports on the implementation of the *Charter*.

TO PROTECT THE FAITHFUL IN THE FUTURE

ARTICLE 12. Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for minors, parents, ministers, employees, volunteers, and others about ways to sustain and foster a safe environment for minors. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons with regard to their contact with minors.

ARTICLE 13. The diocesan/eparchial bishop is to evaluate the background of all incardinated priests and deacons. When a priest or deacon, not incardinated in the diocese/eparchy, is to engage in ministry in the diocese/eparchy, regardless of the length of time, the evaluation of his background may be satisfied through a written attestation of suitability for ministry supplied by his proper ordinary/major superior to the diocese/eparchy. Dioceses/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all their respective diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include contact with minors. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. Each diocese/eparchy is to determine the application/renewal of background checks according to local practice. In addition, they are to employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (see USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation* [Fifth Edition], 2006, no. 39 and the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, n.178 j).²

ARTICLE 14. Transfers of all priests and deacons who have committed an act of sexual abuse against a minor for residence, including retirement, shall be in accord with

Norm 12 of the Essential Norms (see *Proposed Guidelines on the Transfer or Assignment of Clergy and Religious*, adopted by the USCCB, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men [CMSM], the Leadership Conference of Women Religious [LCWR], and the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious [CMSWR] in 1993).

ARTICLE 15. To ensure continuing collaboration and mutuality of effort in the protection of children and young people on the part of the bishops and religious ordinaries, two representatives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men are to serve as consultants to the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People. At the invitation of the Major Superiors, the Committee will designate two of its members to consult with its counterpart at CMSM. Diocesan/eparchial bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates are to meet periodically to coordinate their roles concerning the issue of allegations made against a cleric member of a religious institute ministering in a diocese/eparchy.

ARTICLE 16. Given the extent of the problem of the sexual abuse of minors in our society, we are willing to cooperate with other churches and ecclesial communities, other religious bodies, institutions of learning, and other interested organizations in conducting research in this area.

ARTICLE 17. We commit ourselves to work individually in our dioceses/eparchies and together as a Conference, through the appropriate committees, to strengthen our programs both for initial priestly and diaconal formation and their ongoing formation. With renewed urgency, we will promote programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy for both seminarians and priests based upon the criteria found in *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 50, the *Program of Priestly Formation*, and the *Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*, as well as similar, appropriate programs for deacons based upon the criteria found in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*. We will continue to assist priests, deacons, and seminarians in living out their vocation in faithful and integral ways.

CONCLUSION

As we wrote in 2002, “It is within this context of the essential soundness of the priesthood and of the deep faith of our brothers and sisters in the Church that we know that we can meet and resolve this crisis for now and the future.”

We reaffirm that the vast majority of priests and deacons serve their people faithfully and that they have their esteem and affection. They also have our respect and support and our commitment to their good names and well-being.

An essential means of dealing with the crisis is prayer for healing and reconciliation, and acts of reparation for the grave offense to God and the deep wound inflicted upon his holy people. Closely connected to prayer and acts of reparation is the call to holiness of life and the care of the diocesan/eparchial bishop to ensure that he and his priests and deacons avail themselves of the proven ways of avoiding sin and growing in holiness of life.

IT IS WITH RELIANCE ON THE GRACE OF GOD AND IN A SPIRIT OF PRAYER AND PENANCE THAT WE RENEW THE PLEDGES WHICH WE MADE IN THE 2002 CHARTER:

We pledge most solemnly to one another and to you, God's people, that we will work to our utmost for the protection of children and youth.

We pledge that we will devote to this goal the resources and personnel necessary to accomplish it.

We pledge that we will do our best to ordain to the diaconate and priesthood and put into positions of trust only those who share this commitment to protecting children and youth.

We pledge that we will work toward healing and reconciliation for those sexually abused by clerics.



Much has been done to honor these pledges. We devoutly pray that God who has begun this good work in us will bring it to fulfillment.

This *Charter* is published for the dioceses/eparchies of the United States. It is to be reviewed again after seven years by the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People with the advice of the National Review Board. The results of this review are to be presented to the full Conference of Bishops for confirmation. Authoritative interpretations of its provisions are reserved to the Conference of Bishops.

NOTES

1 For purposes of this *Charter*, the offense of sexual abuse of a minor will be understood in accord with the provisions of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 6, which reads:

§1. The more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are:

1° the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.

2° the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of fourteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology;

§2. A cleric who commits the delicts mentioned above in §1 is to be punished according to the gravity of his crime, not excluding dismissal or deposition.

In view of the Circular Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated May 3, 2011, which calls for “mak[ing] allowance for the legislation of the country where the Conference is located,” Section III(g), we will apply the federal legal age for defining child pornography, which includes pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, for assessing a cleric’s suitability for ministry and for complying with civil reporting statutes.

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.

2 In 2009, after consultation with members of the USCCB Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and approval from the USCCB Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, additional Model Letters of Suitability, now available on the USCCB website, were agreed upon and published for use by bishops and major superiors in situations which involve both temporary and extended ministry for clerics.

ESSENTIAL NORMS FOR DIOCESAN/ EPARCHIAL POLICIES DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS BY PRIESTS OR DEACONS

Most Reverend William S. Skylstad, D.D.,
Bishop of Spokane

May 5, 2006

DECREE OF PROMULGATION

On November 13, 2002, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved as particular law the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*. Following the grant of the required *recognitio* by the Congregation for Bishops on December 8, 2002, the *Essential Norms* were promulgated by the President of the same Conference on December 12, 2002.

Thereafter, on June 17, 2005, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a revised text of the *Essential Norms*. By a decree dated January 1, 2006, and signed by His Eminence, Giovanni Battista Cardinal Re, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and His Excellency, the Most Reverend Francesco Monterisi, Secretary of the same Congregation, the *recognitio* originally granted to the *Essential Norms* of 2002 was extended to the revised version *donec aliter provideatur*.

As President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I therefore decree the promulgation of the *Essential Norms* of June 17, 2005. These *Norms* shall obtain force on May 15, 2006, and so shall from that day bind as particular law all Dioceses and Eparchies of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Most Reverend William S. Skylstad
Bishop of Spokane
President, USCCB
Reverend Monsignor David J. Malloy
General Secretary

PREAMBLE

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The charter addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel (i.e., employees and volunteers). The bishops of the United States have promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position, whether the sexual abuse was recent or occurred many years ago. They stated that they would be as open as possible with the people in parishes and communities about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. They have committed themselves to the pastoral and spiritual care and emotional well-being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families.

In addition, the bishops will work with parents, civil authorities, educators, and various organizations in the community to make and maintain the safest environment for minors. In the same way, the bishops have pledged to evaluate the background of seminary applicants as well as all church personnel who have responsibility for the care and supervision of children and young people.

Therefore, to ensure that each diocese/eparchy in the United States of America will have procedures in place to respond promptly to all allegations of sexual abuse of minors, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops decrees these norms for diocesan/eparchial policies dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors by diocesan and religious priests or deacons.¹ These norms are complementary to the universal law of the Church and are to be interpreted in accordance with that law. The Church has traditionally considered the sexual abuse of minors a grave delict and punishes the offender with penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants.

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For purposes of these Norms, sexual abuse shall include any offense by a cleric against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with a minor as understood in CIC, canon 1395 §2, and CCEO, canon 1453 §1 (*Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, article 6 §1).²

NORMS

1. These Essential Norms have been granted *recognitio* by the Holy See. Having been legitimately promulgated in accordance with the practice of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 5, 2006, they constitute particular law for all the dioceses/eparchies of the United States of America.³

2. Each diocese/eparchy will have a written policy on the sexual abuse of minors by priests and deacons, as well as by other church personnel. This policy is to comply fully with, and is to specify in more detail, the steps to be taken in implementing the requirements of canon law, particularly CIC, canons 1717-1719, and CCEO, canons 1468-1470. A copy of this policy will be filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of the effective date of these norms. Copies of any eventual revisions of the written diocesan/eparchial policy are also to be filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of such modifications.

3. Each diocese/eparchy will designate a competent person to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by priests or deacons.

4. To assist diocesan/eparchial bishops, each diocese/eparchy will also have a review board which will function as a confidential consultative body to the bishop/eparch in discharging his responsibilities. The functions of this board may include

- a. advising the diocesan bishop/eparch in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry;
- b. reviewing diocesan/eparchial policies for dealing with sexual abuse of minors; and
- c. offering advice on all aspects of these cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.

5. The review board, established by the diocesan/eparchial bishop, will be composed of at least five persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church. The majority of the review board members will be

lay persons who are not in the employ of the diocese/eparchy; but at least one member should be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the diocese/eparchy in question, and at least one member should have particular expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors. The members will be appointed for a term of five years, which can be renewed. It is desirable that the Promoter of Justice participate in the meetings of the review board.

6. When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively (CIC, c. 1717; CCEO, c. 1468). During the investigation the accused enjoys the presumption of innocence, and all appropriate steps shall be taken to protect his reputation. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel and will be promptly notified of the results of the investigation. When there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith shall be notified. The bishop/eparch shall then apply the precautionary measures mentioned in CIC, canon 1722, or CCEO, canon 1473—i.e., withdraw the accused from exercising the sacred ministry or any ecclesiastical office or function, impose or prohibit residence in a given place or territory, and prohibit public participation in the Most Holy Eucharist pending the outcome of the process.⁴

7. The alleged offender may be requested to seek, and may be urged voluntarily to comply with, an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually acceptable to the diocese/eparchy and to the accused.

8. When even a single act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants (SST, Art. 6; CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1).⁵

a. In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for in canon law must be observed, and the various provisions of canon law must be considered (cf. *Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995; Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, May 18, 2001). Unless the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, having been notified, calls the case to itself because of special circumstances, it will direct the diocesan bishop/eparch to proceed (Article 13, “Procedural Norms” for *Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis*

tutela, AAS, 93, 2001, p. 787). If the case would otherwise be barred by prescription, because sexual abuse of a minor is a grave offense, the bishop/eparch may apply to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for a derogation from the prescription, while indicating relevant grave reasons. For the sake of canonical due process, the accused is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the diocese/eparchy will supply canonical counsel to a priest. The provisions of CIC, canon 1722, or CCEO, canon 1473, shall be implemented during the pendency of the penal process.

b. If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g., for reasons of advanced age or infirmity), the offender ought to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments. He is to be instructed not to wear clerical garb, or to present himself publicly as a priest.

9. At all times, the diocesan bishop/eparch has the executive power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, through an administrative act, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry.⁶ Because sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1) and is a crime in all civil jurisdictions in the United States, for the sake of the common good and observing the provisions of canon law, the diocesan bishop/eparch shall exercise this power of governance to ensure that any priest or deacon who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described above shall not continue in active ministry.⁷

10. The priest or deacon may at any time request a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state. In exceptional cases, the bishop/eparch may request of the Holy Father the dismissal of the priest or deacon from the clerical state *ex officio*, even without the consent of the priest or deacon.

11. The diocese/eparchy will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and will cooperate in their investigation. In every instance, the diocese/eparchy will advise and support a person's right to make a report to public authorities.⁸

12. No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese/eparchy. Every bishop/eparch who

receives a priest or deacon from outside his jurisdiction will obtain the necessary information regarding any past act of sexual abuse of a minor by the priest or deacon in question.

Before such a diocesan/eparchial priest or deacon can be transferred for residence to another diocese/eparchy, his diocesan/eparchial bishop shall forward, in a confidential manner, to the bishop of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people.

In the case of the assignment for residence of such a clerical member of an institute or a society into a local community within a diocese/eparchy, the major superior shall inform the diocesan/eparchial bishop and share with him in a manner respecting the limitations of confidentiality found in canon and civil law all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people so that the bishop/eparch can make an informed judgment that suitable safeguards are in place for the protection of children and young people. This will be done with due recognition of the legitimate authority of the bishop/eparch; of the provisions of CIC, canon 678 (CCEO, canons 415 §1 and 554 §2), and of CIC, canon 679; and of the autonomy of the religious life (CIC, c. 586).

13. Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and of the person against whom the charge has been made. When an accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

NOTES

- 1 These Norms constitute particular law for the dioceses, eparchies, clerical religious institutes, and societies of apostolic life of the United States with respect to all priests and deacons in the ecclesiastical ministry of the Church in the United States. When a major superior of a clerical religious institute or society of apostolic life applies and interprets them for the internal life and governance of the institute or society, he has the obligation to do so according to the universal law of the Church and the proper law of the institute or society.
 - 2 If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical Delicts*, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.
 - 3 Due regard must be given to the proper legislative authority of each Eastern Catholic Church.
 - 4 Article 19 *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela states*, “With due regard for the right of the Ordinary to impose from the outset of the preliminary investigation those measures which are established in can. 1722 of the Code of Canon Law, or in can. 1473 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the respective presiding judge may, at the request of the Promoter of Justice, exercise the same power under the same conditions determined in the canons themselves.”
 - 5 Removal from ministry is required whether or not the cleric is diagnosed by qualified experts as a pedophile or as suffering from a related sexual disorder that requires professional treatment. With regard to the use of the phrase “ecclesiastical ministry,” by clerical members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, the provisions of canons 678 and 738 also apply, with due regard for canons 586 and 732.
 - 6 Cf. CIC, cc. 35-58, 149, 157, 187-189, 192-195, 277 §3, 381 §1, 383, 391, 1348, and 1740-1747. Cf. also CCEO, cc. 1510 §1 and 2, 1°-2°, 1511, 1512 §§1-2, 1513 §§2-3 and 5, 1514-1516, 1517 §1, 1518, 1519 §2, 1520 §§1-3, 1521, 1522 §1, 1523-1526, 940, 946, 967-971, 974-977, 374, 178, 192 §§1-3, 193 §2, 191, and 1389-1396.
 - 7 The diocesan bishop/eparch may exercise his executive power of governance to take one or more of the following administrative actions (CIC, cc. 381, 129ff.; CCEO, cc. 178, 979ff.):
 - a. He may request that the accused freely resign from any currently held ecclesiastical office (CIC, cc. 187-189; CCEO, cc. 967-971).
 - b. Should the accused decline to resign and should the diocesan bishop/eparch judge the accused to be truly not suitable (CIC, c. 149 §1; CCEO, c. 940) at this time for holding an office previously freely conferred (CIC, c. 157), then he may remove that person from office observing the required canonical procedures (CIC, cc. 192-195, 1740-1747; CCEO, cc. 974-977, 1389-1396).
 - c. For a cleric who holds no office in the diocese/eparchy, any previously delegated faculties may be administratively removed (CIC, cc. 391 §1 and 142 §1; CCEO, cc. 191 §1 and 992 §1), while any *de iure* faculties may be removed or restricted by the competent authority as provided in law (e.g., CIC, c. 764; CCEO, c. 610 §§2-3).
 - d. The diocesan bishop/eparch may also determine that circumstances surrounding a particular case constitute the just and reasonable cause for a priest to celebrate the Eucharist with no member of the faithful present (CIC, c. 906). The bishop may forbid the priest to celebrate the Eucharist publicly and to administer the sacraments, for the good of the Church and for his own good.
 - e. Depending on the gravity of the case, the diocesan bishop/eparch may also dispense (CIC, cc. 85-88; CCEO, cc. 1536 §1–1538) the cleric from the obligation of wearing clerical attire (CIC, c. 284; CCEO, c. 387) and may urge that he not do so, for the good of the Church and for his own good.
- These administrative actions shall be taken in writing and by means of decrees (CIC, cc. 47-58; CCEO, cc. 1510 §2, 1°-2°, 1511, 1513 §§2-3 and 5, 1514, 1517 §1, 1518, 1519 §2, 1520) so that the cleric affected is afforded the opportunity of recourse against them in accord with canon law (CIC, cc. 1734ff.; CCEO, cc. 999ff.).
- 8 The necessary observance of the canonical norms internal to the Church is not intended in any way to hinder the course of any civil action that may be operative. At the same time, the Church reaffirms her right to enact legislation binding on all her members concerning the ecclesiastical dimensions of the delict of sexual abuse of minors.

A STATEMENT OF EPISCOPAL COMMITMENT

We bishops pledge again to respond to the demands of the *Charter* in a way that manifests our accountability to God, to God's people, and to one another. Individually and together, we acknowledge mistakes in the past when some bishops transferred, from one assignment to another, priests who abused minors. We recognize our roles in the suffering this has caused, and we continue to ask forgiveness for it.

Without at all diminishing the importance of broader accountability, this statement focuses on the accountability which flows from our episcopal communion and fraternal solidarity, a moral responsibility we have with and for each other.

While bishops are ordained primarily for their diocese or eparchy, we are called as well to protect the unity and to promote the common discipline of the whole Church (CIC, c. 392; CCEO, c. 201). Participating in the college of bishops, each bishop is responsible to act in a manner that reflects both effective and affective collegiality.

Respecting the legitimate rights of bishops who are directly accountable to the Holy See, in a spirit of collegiality and fraternity we renew our commitment to the following:

1. Within each of our provinces, we will assist each other to interpret correctly and implement, within our respective jurisdictions, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, always respecting Church law and striving to reflect the Gospel.

2. We will apply the requirements of the *Charter* also to ourselves, respecting always Church law as it applies to bishops. Therefore, if a bishop is accused of the sexual abuse of a minor, the accused bishop is obliged to inform the Apostolic Nuncio. If another bishop becomes aware of the sexual abuse of a minor by another bishop or of an allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a bishop, he too is obliged to inform the Apostolic Nuncio and comply with applicable civil laws.

3. In cases of financial demands for settlements involving allegations of any sexual misconduct by a bishop, he, or any of us who become aware of it, is obliged to inform the Apostolic Nuncio.

4. Within each of our provinces, as an expression of collegiality, including fraternal support, fraternal challenge and fraternal correction, we will engage in ongoing mutual reflection upon our commitment to holiness of life and upon the exercise of our episcopal ministry.

In making this statement, we firmly uphold the dignity of every human being and renew our commitment to live and promote the chastity required of all followers of Christ and especially of deacons, priests and bishops.

This Statement of Episcopal Commitment will be reviewed by the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations upon the next review of the *Charter*.

A PRAYER for HEALING

VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by his Blood on the Cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters
who have been gravely harmed,
and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,
steady their shaken spirits with faith.
Grant them justice for their cause,
enlightened by your truth.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform brokenness into wholeness.
Grant us the courage and wisdom,
humility and grace, to act with justice.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.