

“CHILDREN ARE A GIFT FROM THE LORD A GIFT FROM THE WOMB, A REWARD.”

Psalm 127, 3

PROMISE TO PROTECT PLEDGE TO HEAL

How the Diocese of San Bernardino responds to clergy sexual abuse of minors

Vigilant Response



New Ministry: The Diocese has created several entities to address all aspects of this issue; the Office of Child and Youth Protection, the Diocesan Review Board, and the Victim Assistance Ministry. The Office of Priest Personnel also works extensively in this ministry.

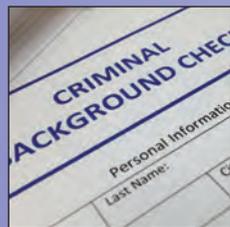
Zero Tolerance: Any clergy with even one credible allegation of abuse is permanently banned from public ministry in the Diocese. All clergy accused of child sexual abuse are immediately removed from ministry, pending determination of credibility.

Reporting to Authorities: Any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor received by the Diocese is immediately reported to law enforcement.

Investigation: The Diocesan Review Board reviews each allegation and makes a recommendation to Bishop Barnes as to its credibility. The Board includes lay experts in the fields of law enforcement, legal, education and psychology.

Disclosure: Once the Diocese determines an allegation of clergy sexual abuse of a child to be credible, it is publicly disclosed in parishes where the priest has served and anyone else who has been abused is encouraged to come forward and report it. The Diocese has also published a list to its web site of all priests with credible allegations of abuse from the beginning of the Diocese in 1978 to the present.

Prevention



Background Checks: The Diocese requires criminal background checks of all clergy, diocesan, parish and Catholic school lay employees as well as candidates for Ordination to the priesthood and the diaconate. The method used is Live Scan fingerprinting done by the California Department of Justice.

Screening: All diocesan, parish and school volunteers who have regular contact with minors must first be subjected to a background screening.

References: All clergy coming from outside the Diocese who wish to minister here must first present a letter of good standing from their home diocese or religious community. This letter attests that the priest does not have any prior credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against him.

Training and Education



All clergy, employees, catechists, and volunteers ministering to or with minors must complete Safe Environment Training. This training covers the California Mandated Reporting Law, and the “Protecting God’s Children” Virtus™ program. Training must be renewed every five years for a priest to maintain his faculties in the Diocese.

This training offers individuals tools for protecting minors and vulnerable adults from abuse.

In the last five years 38,000 adults have received this training.

All minors enrolled in diocesan schools, catechetical and youth ministry programs, and any other programs designed for minors must complete age appropriate (K-12) Safe Environment Training. **Each year, over 40,000 minors receive this training.**

Accompaniment of Victims



The Diocese has a Victim Assistance Coordinator who responds to the pastoral and behavioral health needs of victims.

The Diocese of San Bernardino offers victims of abuse spiritual healing retreats through its Restoring-Me Ministry. These retreats are open to all those individuals who have suffered any type of abuse in their lives.

The Diocese provides counseling services for victims upon their request.

The Diocese has paid approximately \$25 million in compensation to victims of clergy sexual abuse during its history.



Since 2003, the Diocese has been audited annually by mandated agencies of the USCCB to measure our compliance with the National Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

In every audit, the Diocese has been found to be in compliance with the Charter.

For more information, please call the Office of Child & Youth Protection at (909) 475-5125.

If you have been abused by a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer in the Diocese of San Bernardino please report it to law-enforcement where the abuse occurred.

You may also report the abuse to:
Diocesan Hotline: 888.206.9090 | Victims Assistant Coordinator: 909.855.2296
Office of Child & Youth Protection: 909.475.5127