

Audit of Dioceses' Compliance with Child Protection Measures Released Today

An independent survey of compliance of the Archdiocese of Baltimore with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People found the Archdiocese to be in full compliance with the articles of the Charter, which calls for promoting healing and reconciliation; guaranteeing an effective response to allegations of abuse of a minor; and protecting the faithful in the future.

The results are part of the third consecutive independent audit of every Catholic diocese and eparchy in the United States to determine compliance with the articles of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter-adopted at the Bishops' meeting in Dallas in June 2002.

Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, said, "We will continue to remain vigilant in our efforts to safeguard children from the scourge of sexual abuse and to work with victims of abuse to promote healing and understanding."

The audits were conducted by the Gavin Group, Inc., headed by Mr. William Gavin, a former FBI official. Though not required to do so, the Archdiocese of Baltimore elected to participate in a full on-site audit, which was mandated for dioceses found not to have been compliant with the provisions of the Charter as of December 31, 2004. Of the 191 Catholic dioceses or eparchies, only 19 requested the full on-site audit. The Archdiocese of Baltimore has been found to be in full compliance with all three independent audits conducted since 2003.

The auditors conducted interviews with the bishop and diocesan officials responsible for Charter implementation, reviewed supporting documentation, and conducted in-person and/or telephone interviews with representatives of the Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office and the Independent Review Board, which is comprised of respected citizens from different faith backgrounds and whose function is to review the Archdiocese's policies and particular decisions.

The full *Report on the Implementation of the 'Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People'* is available on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website, www.usccb.org.