



March 1, 2009

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

The Honorable Michael R. Merz, Chair
National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People

Your Eminence and Judge,

The 2008 audit of each participating Diocese and Eparchy (D/E) in the United States to determine their compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was again conducted by The Gavin Group, Inc. For various reasons, seven of the Dioceses and Eparchies chose not to participate in the audit process. They were: the Diocese of Baker in Bend, OR; the Diocese of Lincoln in Lincoln, NE; the Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle-Chaldeans in Southfield, MI; the Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle-Chaldeans in El Cajon, CA; the Eparchy of Newton for Melkites in Roslindale, MA; the Eparchy of St. Josephat for Ukrainians in Parma, OH; and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Deliverance-Syriacs in Union City, NJ.

The protocol for the 2008 audit process for the Dioceses and Eparchies was decided by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and mandated a full on-site audit of one third of all D/Es for the years 2008, 2009, and 2010. The D/Es not receiving a full audit would be required to participate in a data collection audit wherein they would provide specific information to an auditor concerning victims, accused, safe environment training and background inquiries conducted. Eighteen of the sixty-four full audits conducted also included parish audits, which included a visitation to the parish by the auditor.

In order to keep the focus of the audits on the protection of the children, the audit forms utilized were revised for the 2008 audit to increase the ease of execution and to ensure that all that should be done for the safety of the children was being accomplished. In addition, 2008 was the first time that the audit period for all D/Es encompassed the same time period of July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008. This was an accommodation to the majority of those being audited and enhanced the uniformity of the collection, presentation and evaluation of all information provided.

As had been done on past occasions, eight workshops were conducted in different geographical regions. Each D/E was encouraged to send representatives involved in the execution of the mandates of the *Charter* to a workshop in order to assist them in their

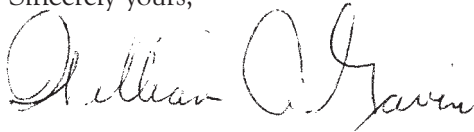
understanding of the manner in which the various documents were to be completed, to answer any questions concerning aspects of the audit and to articulate the expectations of the audit process. A similar training session was conducted for the auditors to guarantee that they also understood that the main purpose for the audits was to measure conformity to the *Charter*, thus protecting the children and responding to those who had been abused.

Four dioceses were found to be non-compliant at the end of the audit period, June 30, 2008, and of those, three attained compliance by December 31, 2008. Management letters which offered guidance for performance improvement or enhancement were provided to 23 of the 188 D/Es that were recipients of data collection audits. Because of the limited information collected from the data collection audits, no assessment regarding compliance was made on the new information received. It was agreed that if the D/E was compliant in 2007 that designation would continue to 2008. Dioceses and Eparchies that were recipients of full audits received compliance assessments based upon the 2008 audit results.

To demonstrate the outstanding manner in which the D/Es have addressed their *Charter* obligations, it is pointed out that this year only four dioceses or 2% of those audited were non-compliant. The lack of non-compliance issues does not tell the full story of the dedication of the Bishops, Eparchs and their staffs. It is the positive, proactive and caring manner in which they have discharged their responsibilities that demonstrates their dedication. During this audit period many more D/Es have established internal controls and protocols that exceed *Charter* mandates and that address the problem of potential child abuse at the parish level. By so doing they have ensured that problems are identified, aggressively addressed and rapidly adjudicated.

Expressing the gratitude of The Gavin Group, Inc., to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and the National Review Board is not a simple formality; rather it is an expression of true appreciation at being given a real and independent role in your vital endeavor to keep our children safe, afford assistance to those who have been victims of abuse and restore the image of the Catholic Church to the position it has genuinely earned. The courage and conviction of the leaders of the Catholic Church has added meaning to our role.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William A. Gavin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and "G".

William A. Gavin
President
The Gavin Group, Inc.