

## USCCB Audit of Beaumont Diocese Completed

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June, 2002, sets forth a number of procedures and practices which are to be implemented by all Bishops within the United States to protect children from instances of abuse. The Charter also calls for an evaluation of the progress made by each diocese as to their implementation of the Charter, and it directs the new USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection to develop an appropriate audit mechanism for this measurement. (To find the Charter and other information about what the Bishops are doing to protect children and young people, go to the USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection at [www.usccb.org/ocyp/index.htm](http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/index.htm).)

All 195 Roman Catholic dioceses in the U.S. are being audited between May 1, 2003 and November, 2003, and the audit is being conducted by The Gavin Group, Inc. The audits, which take approximately one week to complete, include a review of diocesan policies regarding sexual abuse of minors, safe environment programs, pastoral outreach programs, and other actions that are directed by the Charter. The main focus of the audit is compliance with implementation of the Charter since June, 2002. The final report from the Bishops' Conference will be released sometime in late December, 2003. Each diocese will be identified within the report, and any instances of non-compliance by a diocese will be noted.

The audit of the Diocese of Beaumont was conducted the week of September 8 - 12, 2003. Two auditors (both retired FBI agents) spent the week reviewing the responses and documentation provided in the 22-page audit instrument and interviewing about 25 persons throughout the diocese. These persons were pre-selected by the auditors based on the position they held in the diocese. The auditors interviewed me, my closest collaborators, several diocesan department heads, our diocesan attorney, all of the lay members of our Diocesan Review Board, the Beaumont Chief of Police, the Chief of Corrections Division of Jefferson County's District Attorney's Office, and two pastors. The auditors called a few parishioners, each from a different parish, and spoke with them by phone. In addition, the auditors reviewed the "Compliance Surveys" that were submitted by the parishes regarding background checks and distribution of the Ethical and Responsible Conduct Policies to employees and volunteers who have access to and contact with children and young people.

In every way, the diocese cooperated with the auditors and the process of evaluation. Even though annual financial audits have been done for many years, this was the first time that an ecclesiastical audit has ever been conducted in this diocese. I found the auditors to be professional, personable, positive, and helpful. We not only learned from them, but they also learned from us, and that spirit of openness and cooperation contributed to a productive outcome. Basically, we were found to be in compliance with the Charter. Look for the final report from the Bishops' Conference about late December to find out what the auditors' conclusions were for the Diocese of Beaumont.

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Update: In a letter dated November 17, 2003, it was confirmed by the auditing firm (The Gavin Group, Inc.) that "The Diocese of Beaumont is now in full compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."