



Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap
Archbishop of Denver

Statements

Letter to the faithful on the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People"

January 4, 2004

Dear friends in Christ,

This past summer, a team of investigators visited the Archdiocese of Denver and reviewed our efforts to comply with the U.S. bishops' 2002 "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

The results of that local audit - part of a nationwide review of all U.S. diocesan policies - will be released this week, on Tuesday, Jan. 6. We're pleased and grateful to report that the Archdiocese of Denver was found to be fully compliant with the charter. The investigating team commended the archdiocese in several key areas, including proactive conduct policies that began in the early 1990s.

A strong sexual misconduct policy has been mandatory for all clergy and lay employees of the Archdiocese of Denver since 1991. For more than 12 years, the Church in Northern Colorado has been alert to the danger of sexual abuse both within and outside the Church. We've worked hard to prevent sexual misconduct by clergy and lay staff.

Sexual misconduct is a serious sin. Sexual abuse of a minor is a serious crime, and it should be reported to law enforcement authorities immediately. When it occurs in a Church-related setting, it wounds innocent children and families, betrays the believing community and undermines the discipleship of thousands of good priests and lay workers. The Archdiocese of Denver does not and will not tolerate it. And in the years ahead, we will continue to do everything we can to root it out of our Church life.

In 2004, training programs will begin throughout the archdiocese to help people identify, prevent and report child sexual abuse. These programs will play an important part in our Church life into the future. We'll continue to update our Code of Conduct for clergy and lay employees to keep it effective.

The Jan. 6 audit report will be followed in late February by the John Jay College survey on clergy sexual abuse as a national phenomenon. The U.S. bishops do not yet have the results of the John Jay survey. We will share important information about these issues publicly as soon as possible.

We want to pledge to you, our people, that the Church in Northern Colorado is determined to protect our young people and families from any form of sexual abuse by clergy or lay employees. That has been our commitment for many years. It remains our commitment today - and permanently.

May God bless all of us as we begin this new year. And may He guide our Church to be the beacon of holiness and hope Christ intended her to be.

Your brothers in the Lord,

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver

Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez, S.T.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of Denver