

From: Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.

August 29, 2016

RESULTS OF RECENT USCCB CHARTER AUDIT #6

On July 25-26, 2016, an on-site audit of the diocese's compliance with the USCCB "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" was conducted. The two auditors were from StoneBridge Business Partners of Rochester, NY, which provides forensic, internal, and compliance auditing services to leading organizations nationwide. For the past 6 years, StoneBridge has been contracted by the U.S. Bishops' Conference to conduct the Charter audits. Reviewing a substantial amount of documentation showing how the elements of the Charter are implemented throughout the diocese, the auditors also reviewed the two reports submitted by the parishes and schools regarding: 1) the safe environment training of students in religious education and Catholic schools, and 2) the background screenings and safe environment training of employees and volunteers.

I recently received the determination letter from StoneBridge stating that *the Diocese of Beaumont is fully in compliance with the Charter.*

A recommendation was made by the auditors that parishes and schools provide more information to parishioners and parents about the existence of standards of conduct for those who minister and work in the Church and about whom to contact if anyone has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Church. While this information has always been provided to participants in the initial "Protecting God's Children" training session for adults, and while the diocesan website has published this information for over a decade, more publication on the part of parishes and schools will further strengthen our efforts to keep our children and youth safe. Posters and pamphlets placed in churches and schools and parish bulletins are concrete ways to distribute this information.

I want to thank all of our clergy, school principals, diocesan, parish, and school staffs and our volunteers for all of your efforts to implement the Charter. I encourage our children and youth to know how to recognize abuse and to tell a trusted adult if they are hurt or made uncomfortable. I encourage adults to report boundary violations so that any grooming behavior on the part of an offender will be noticed and taken seriously. I also encourage anyone who has cause to believe that a child has been abused to make a report immediately to Child Protective Services or local law enforcement.

For more than a decade, our children and youth have had safe environment training through our parishes and schools. Likewise, all clergy, seminarians, employees and volunteers have received the "Protecting God's Children" safe environment training. As of June 30, 2016, 515 training sessions for adults have been conducted around the diocese since October, 2003, and 8,807 adults have been trained. Background screenings are conducted on all employees and those volunteers who work with children and youth. More information and resources are available on the diocesan website (www.dioceseofbmt.org) under the "Safe Environment" tab.

May we all continue to be diligent in maintaining an environment where our children and youth are safe!