



**ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of ORANGE**

PASTORAL CENTER: COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

**HUMBLE AND VIGILANT RESPONSE TO
ABUSE CRISIS IN CHURCH**

Our Diocese and the Church more broadly have publicly acknowledged past failings and have apologized personally to the victims of abuse and their families. In June of 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) instituted the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#) in response to the sexual abuse crisis in the Church and pledged to promote healing and reconciliation with victim survivors of sexual abuse, guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors, ensure the accountability of their procedures, and protect the faithful in the future. An unaffiliated auditing firm charged with verifying Diocesan compliance with these mandates has deemed the Diocese of Orange to be in full compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People every year since its inception in 2003.

The Diocese of Orange has made clear its commitment to the fair resolution of every legitimate abuse claim. The bold initiative to settle the 2003 clergy abuse cases in a respectful and humble manner and to institute strict procedures for the protection of children and young people has been seen as a model for others. We also took the unprecedented step of releasing all appropriate personnel files related to this settlement in May of 2005.

In 2002 the diocese implemented a comprehensive approach to ensuring that children and teens are as safe as we can possibly make them. The Diocese of Orange employs a comprehensive background screening for all adults likely to be in contact with children - already over 75,000 have been vetted. This process allows for the collection of a wide variety of past screening data, including extensive backgrounds checks and fingerprinting, and is designed to enhance already in-place diocesan policies.

Since 2002 all clergy, employees, and volunteers have been required to undergo Safe Environment Training. In 2014 alone, the Diocese trained 244 priests, 108 deacons and 67 candidates, 1,741 teachers, and more than 27,550 school employees and volunteers. Our schools and Religious Education classes at parishes and diocesan centers also provide Safe Environment education for children. This procedure is suited to their age and level of understanding. In 2014, nearly 55,000 children participated in this critically important awareness program.

In addition to these important background screening and training requirements, the Diocese has introduced the following procedures:

- The Diocese cooperates with law enforcement and appropriate agencies in the reporting of incidents of childhood sexual abuse.



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- Convened an [independent oversight board](#) to investigate any and all claims of abuse.
- Pamphlets outlining our policies are available in the vestibules of our churches and in the offices of our schools and religious education.
- Every member of the clergy and every employee have read and signed the diocesan policy on sexual misconduct.
- Seminaries are doing a better job of both psychological screening and educating the men applying for admission to the priesthood.
- Background checks are conducted for all seminarians, priests, and religious.
- All of our elementary schools have adopted the RCL Benzinger, Family Life Series Safety Program and all parish religious education programs have implemented *Circle of Grace*, a safety education program to their curriculum. This provides age appropriate education for our children and information for teachers and parents.
- Our high schools have all developed a safety education curriculum.
- The Diocese offers safe environment training, *Keeping Our Children and Youth Safe*, for all new employees and volunteers twice a year.
- For more than 10 years the Diocese has had a reporting line for anyone who has a concern about acts of childhood sexual abuse.

Bishop Vann and the Diocese remain committed to ensuring the events of the past are never repeated and remain vigilant in protecting our children and young people.