

January 6, 2004

Archdiocese of Detroit Commended For Its Mandatory Reporting to Civil Authorities

The Archdiocese of Detroit has received four commendations in a national audit of diocesan child protection efforts, including special recognition for its agreement with civil authorities in the six counties of the archdiocese for handling allegations of sexual abuse of minors. The audit, conducted by the Boston-based Gavin Group for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, assessed how the nation's dioceses had complied with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. This document, also known as the "Dallas Charter," was adopted overwhelmingly by the nation's Catholic bishops in June 2002. The archdiocese's audit results and other child protection materials are on the Internet at www.aodonline.org; all diocesan results are at www.usccb.org.

Each diocese was assessed on how well it met specific requirements in four areas of the *Charter*: (1) promoting healing and reconciliation; (2) effectively responding to allegations of abuse of a minor; (3) ensuring accountability of child protection efforts; and (4) protecting children in the future.

The Detroit archdiocese also received four recommendations (suggestions for improvements) from the auditors, which were addressed as of December 1, 2003. The Detroit archdiocese was found to be fully "compliant" with the provisions of the "Dallas Charter."

Two former FBI agents working for the Gavin Group conducted the on-site audit of the archdiocese in June 2003. They reviewed records, policies and materials and interviewed archdiocesan staff, state and local law enforcement officials, a victim, clergy and laity during an intensive examination of archdiocesan child protection efforts.

In addition to its mandated policy on reporting to civil authorities, the archdiocese also received special commendations for its mandated background check requirements for employees and volunteers; for its communications policy and procedures assisting parishes directly affected by abuse; and for its written sexual abuse policy which has been on the books for 16 years.

"I am grateful to have outside, independent auditors review what we've been doing here," said Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit, "and I believe all dioceses can and will learn from each other through this process.

"We are all focused on doing one thing— being absolutely sure that we can create the safest possible environment for our young people in the Church," the cardinal added. "Like any human situation, we can do better in some areas. But, we have before us victims who are still suffering; we need to continue to reach out to them."