

# Promise to Protect. Pledge to Heal.

“We can’t give the victims of abuse back their innocence, but we can assure them that we will do all in our power to see to it that no child is so harmed again.”

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

*On January 6, 2004, the Office of Child and Youth Protection of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued its first report on the compliance of Catholic dioceses and eparchies (dioceses of the Eastern Catholic Churches) in implementing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.*

*Adopted in June 2002, the Charter established the framework for preventing abuse of minors by clergy and protecting all children and young people in the Church’s care.*

#### **Protecting young people.**

The Charter provides for creating “safe environments” in which young people are secure. It also provides for strict enforcement of codes of conduct for all those, including clergy, who come in contact with children and youth, whether they are full time employees or volunteers.

#### **Healing and reconciliation with victims of abuse.**

The Charter calls for dioceses to reach out to victims of sexual abuse, offering healing counsel and services and appointing victims’ assistance coordinators.

#### **Effective response to allegations of sexual abuse.**

The Charter states that dioceses are to report allegations of abuse of minors, cooperate with civil authorities’ investigations, and support the right of every victim to make a report to the authorities. The Catholic Church is fully committed to removing abusers from ministry.

#### **Ensuring bishops’ and dioceses’ accountability.**

The Bishops’ Office of Child and Youth Protection has made it possible for the first time to audit the performance of Catholic dioceses to ensure the safety of minors. The Bishops created a National Review Board of prominent lay Catholics to assist and monitor the Office to guarantee that the promise of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is realized.



*There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young.*

Pope John Paul II

Please see the “Report on the Implementation of the ‘Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People’” at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)