

Catholic Diocese of Richmond
OFFICE OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reflecting on the 2018-2019 audit year, one word that comes to mind is “trust.” Trusting is reliance on someone and having confidence that they will be faithful to their commitments. The pain and anger we saw this during this audit year is the result of trust being broken – the trust between the Church and victim survivors and the trust between the Church and the lay faithful. It is that trust, as shepherd of this local Church, that I am called to rebuild.

During the listening sessions in fall 2018, I reflected that trust is easily broken and difficult to rebuild. It will take the consistent implementation of my commitments in all areas, including child protection.

The Office of Safe Environment and I will continue to respond to victim survivors in charity and justice and work to protect all those who have been entrusted to our care. It is my hope that as you read this annual report, you will see the implementation of commitments made in fall 2018.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. May the grace of our Lord be with you and our Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

+David C. Kristan

Bishop of Richmond

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SUMMARY OF YEAR

The audit year 2018 - 2019 reflects a difficult year in the life of the Church. Shortly after the start of the year, the Church was once again confronted with the expansive and profound impact of child sexual abuse. In his September 2018 letter, "From Tragedy to Hope" Bishop Knestout made a commitment to the diocese that he would demonstrate leadership in child protection.

During this year, the Office of Safe Environment ministered to those who have experienced child sexual abuse, their families, and all those in our Church community impacted. The office saw an unprecedented increase in the number of reports made through the victim assistance reporting line. The office made pastoral outreach by compassionately and respectfully working with victim survivors through the disclosure process and acting as a supportive presence and advocate throughout various Diocesan processes. In addition, the office provided referrals, made notifications to law enforcement on victim survivors' behalf, and

extended offers of reimbursement for therapeutic support. During the fall of 2018, the office sat on various parish panels and spoke with members of parish communities to address questions and concerns.

Steps were also taken to strengthen prevention efforts through raising awareness about child sexual abuse and diligently screening those who have been entrusted with the care of minors. The office hosted the second largest number of VIRTUS sessions in a single audit year and began educating Church personnel on maintaining healthy boundaries. In addition, more stringent compliance measures were put into place, to ensure that screening policies and procedures are carried out with fidelity.

PASTORAL OUTREACH

In April 2019, Bishop Knestout hosted the inaugural Rosary for Healing and Protection as a part of Child Abuse Prevention Month. This time of prayer was livestreamed through diocesan social media, the USCCB, and dioceses across the country. The video has received over 3,000 views.*

*As of April 20, 2020

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Allegations Reported on Audit

On the USCCB Audit for July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, the Catholic Diocese of Richmond's Office of Safe Environment reported **47** allegations of sexual abuse of minors. The dates of incidents reported follow the national trend. **Instances of abuse peaked in the 1970s and significantly dropped in subsequent years.** To date, the most recent incident of abuse reported occurred prior to 1996.

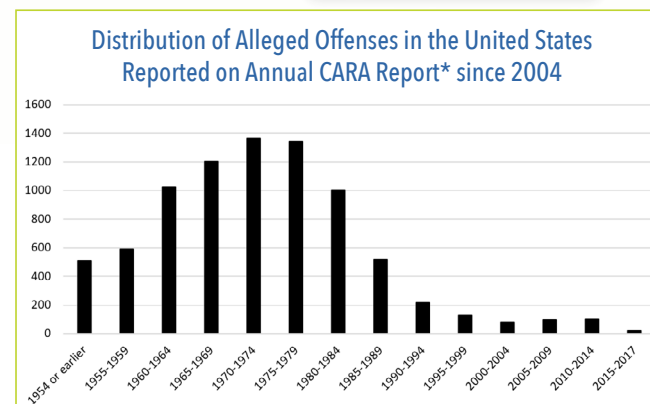
2 allegations were reported to the Diocese of Richmond prior to July 1, 2018, were under review at the end of the previous audit year, and were determined during this audit year.

18 allegations of child sexual abuse were reported to the office during the Audit Year.

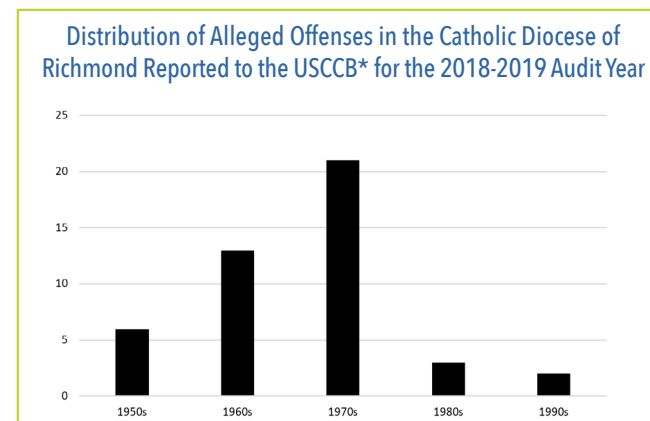
- Two of these allegations were abuse that occurred in another diocese but were reported to our diocese. The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) worked to link these individuals with the VAC for the dioceses in which the abuse occurred and provided referrals for local services as appropriate.

27 reports were allegations identified through the file review that were previously reported to the diocese but not reported on previous audits.

Most of these reports were made in the fall 2018 or identified during the file review and are reflected in the list of clergy with credible and substantiated allegations of child sexual abuse that was released February 2019. Since February 2019, the diocese has updated the list as additional information and allegations were brought forward. The complete list of clergy with credible and substantiated allegations of sexual abuse against a minor can be found at: richmonddiocese.org/list



*Data reported in 2017 by Center for Applied Research of the Apostolate.



*This data reflects the number of incidents that were reported to the Diocese of Richmond during the 2018-2019 audit year.

COMPLIANCE

The office began conducting safe environment-focused site visits and at the end of the audit year requested all locations complete a detailed audit survey, structured after the USCCB audit.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT Program Highlights



Over **300** VIRTUS Protecting God's Children sessions were hosted. Those were the **most sessions** hosted in a single audit year since the inception of the Safe Environment program in 2005.



An additional **10** facilitators joined a team of **135** committed volunteers. Facilitators serve in all deaneries of the diocese to ensure that parishioners have access to this necessary training.



Over **5,400** background screenings were processed. More than **2,000** screenings were processed for clergy and employees and **3,400** were processed for volunteers. These screenings include initial and 5-year re-screens.





Special Dedication

In January of 2005, the Office of Safe Environment was established with the hiring of Maryjane Fuller, as the first Safe Environment Coordinator. In the 15 years since, Maryjane tirelessly and graciously worked to protect all of God's precious children. The efforts detailed in this report represent the last full audit year that Maryjane served with the Diocese of Richmond. Our office would like to dedicate this annual report to Maryjane and extend heartfelt appreciation for her unwavering support and dedication.