We Pledge

A REPORT TO THE CATHOLIC PEOPLE
We Pledge...

A Report to the Catholic People

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Diocese has worked faithfully to implement safety programs since the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In the wake of these revelations during the past several months, the Diocese of Harrisburg and the dioceses across the Commonwealth have taken a hard look at ourselves and at the steps we can take to further strengthen our Youth Protection programs. The months since the Grand Jury Report have been a time to acknowledge that we failed the most vulnerable among us — children and young adults. We deeply regret the pain of survivors of clergy abuse and the failures from leadership, which could have prevented their suffering. Our mission is to make this right for survivors, for our parishioners, and for the general public.

I know many of you have questions regarding the Grand Jury Report — what steps have we taken to ensure the safety of our children, how are we helping survivors, how are we meeting our financial obligations, and where the Church goes from here.

As I am now resuming a full schedule, I am hosting listening sessions throughout the Diocese, to hear your concerns and provide answers to your questions. Until such time as I can visit your Deanery, we have developed this report, detailing the many steps the Diocese of Harrisburg has, and continues to take, to ensure the safety of all children in our care. I encourage you to read through the information contained in its pages.

If you still have questions, I encourage you to speak with your pastor or email me at AskBishopGainer@hbgdiocese.org.

Be assured of my continued prayers for you, your families and all survivors of clergy abuse. My God Bless you for your continued faith.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of Harrisburg

A Prayer for Healing

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just:

You gave your only Son to save us by his blood on the cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters who have been gravely harmed, and the cries of those who love them.

Soothe their restless hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits with faith. Grant them justice for their cause, enlightened by your truth.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people’s wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness.

Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice. Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors. Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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The Diocese of Harrisburg has implemented many safety programs and protocols since 2002 to keep kids safe.

One of these programs is our Safe Environment Program. This program, which began in the early 2000s, uses age appropriate lessons to teach children a range of personal safety topics.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002, requires that parishes and/or Catholic schools educate children in the areas of safety and the integrity of their person. The Diocese’s philosophy with this program is to directly involve parents in this instruction.

In addition to classroom presentations on safety topics, parents receive materials to help guide their own discussions with their children.

All children enrolled in the Diocese’s Catholic Schools or religious education programs receive these safety lessons in first, fifth and ninth grades.

The safety topics addressed in the lessons include good touch, bad touch and saying no; the importance of using the buddy system; being aware of your surroundings and never hitchhiking; what to do if approached by a stranger; how to respond to a range of situations when home alone; why it is important to tell your parents if you are communicating (verbally or written) with an adult; avoiding drugs and alcohol; and the importance of speaking up if you or a friend are in danger.

Changes in technology is an area of endless safety challenges and the Diocese includes a variety of safety lessons around the use of technology. In addition to the classroom lessons, parents are provided materials and information on using technology through the eyes of faith; best practices to consider for Internet use; and basic information on teaching children ways to remain safe when online.

Through the policies which have been in place for the past 15 years, the Diocese of Harrisburg has trained more than 32,000 adults (clergy, seminarians, teachers, employees, volunteers, vendors, etc.), through more than 50,000 hours of training programs, how to recognize and report suspected child abuse. During this same time, more than 60,000 youth in our schools and religious education programs have completed our Safe Environment Training programs.

The Diocese has a range of other youth safety programs and policies in place. Learn more at www.YouthProtectionHBG.com.

“Today, our schools, parishes and youth organizations are some of the safest places for children and young people to gather. But I won’t ask you to just accept my word; rather, accept the facts collected over a period of decades.”

— BISHOP RONALD W. GAINER
Bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg
The application and safe-environment training for our seminarians looks very different today than in years past, for the better.

When a man feels God may be calling him to the priesthood, after his prayerful discernment and perhaps spending time talking to a priest he knows and trusts, he requests an application from the Diocese.

The application itself will take several months to complete, as the man will share his discernment history; write an autobiography of his life; review his work, school, and financial history and understanding of the various pillars of the Catholic Faith; complete State Police and FBI background checks and state-certified safe-environment training; and submit four to six letters of recommendation from priests, family, employers, and teachers who know him the best.

Candidates complete an in-depth psychological evaluation, spending a full day at a psychologist's office and another half day for the results. This psychological evaluation explores the candidate's family background, intellectual strengths/weaknesses, mental illness, psychosexual history and social abilities, and provides a strong case of whether he is fit and/or capable of undergoing seminary formation.

Each application is reviewed by the Bishop and a Review Board, which includes a 30-45 minute interview of the candidate. Based on the application, interview, and with feedback from the Review Board, the Bishop will either accept a man for seminary formation or decline his application.

Today, seminary formation is an intensive six to nine year process. Each candidate has a formation advisor he meets with regularly to ensure he meets the various goals required of him, including his healthy psychological maturing.

Each man undergoes a full psychological evaluation a second time, halfway through his time in formation, to help explore where he has grown and where he still needs help.

Seminarians participate in 6-10 summer/yearly pastoral experiences. With each experience, we require five or six members of the parish to complete an evaluation, sharing the positives and any possible concerns they have for these men. These evaluations are used to help us personalize the seminarian’s formation program for the coming year.

At the end of every year, the seminary’s formation team meets to examine each candidate carefully, to determine whether to vote him through to the next year or to ordination.

Each seminarian knows that the Diocese can dismiss him for various reasons, but most especially in breaching the code of conduct expected of him. The bar is not set at “do not sin,” but at “be beyond reproach.”

Our seminarians understand that Jesus is calling them to holiness and that they cannot settle for anything less. They love the People of God in the Diocese of Harrisburg, and it is for these people that they are willing to undergo arguably the most intense application process and seminary formation that the Church, in 2000 years, has ever offered.
We Pledge...  
A Safe Environment for Youth

Q: What kind of safety procedures are in place?
All of our Catholic schools, religious education programs and other youth programs comply with the Diocese of Harrisburg and Pennsylvania law regarding youth protection. We provide safe environment lessons to our youth, ensuring they understand ways to be safe and what to do if they don't feel safe. All of our procedures are audited annually to ensure compliance with Diocesan and State regulations.

In the event an allegation would be made, we immediately report that allegation to law enforcement and ChildLine. Any teacher, principal, aide, volunteer, etc. accused of inappropriate contact with a minor is suspended from their position, pending the outcome of law enforcement's investigation.

Q: How do I know the policies are in place and working?
All of the youth-related activities in the Diocese undergo an annual independent audit. The audit, completed by StoneBridge Business Partners, evaluates our compliance with the youth protection guidelines established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Through this audit, we report the total number of youth in our programs (schools, religious education, etc.); the total number of clergy, and paid and volunteer staff who work with these youth; the types and quantity of background checks completed; opportunities we are providing for continued training for these individuals; and an evaluation of our safety programs and procedures.

Q: Why do I see people wearing Diocese’s ID badges?
Every person who works with children in the Diocese of Harrisburg, whether a teacher, principal, volunteer, vendor, etc., has been required to complete a range of background checks since the early 2000’s. These badges are a visual means of indicating who has completed these checks and is authorized to work with our youth. The State of Pennsylvania did not require these checks for volunteers until 2016.

Q: Do the background checks for teachers, volunteers, priests and those who have regular contact with children in our Catholic schools meet Pennsylvania’s standards?
Yes, we are required to meet all Pennsylvania state standards for every individual who works with our youth.

Q: Is the Diocese doing anything to teach children how to stay safe?
The Diocese has implemented many safety programs and protocols since 2002. In both our schools and religious education programs, all students in first, fifth and ninth grades complete our Safe Environment Program. This program uses age appropriate lessons to teach children a range of personal safety topics.

Q: Are the safety procedures for the Diocese’s schools the same for its Religious Education programs?
Yes. The Diocese's religious education teachers are required to have the same clearances as our school teachers. Many of the Diocese's employees and volunteers are mandated reporters and if we receive a report, even third or fourth hand, we immediately call the local authorities and ChildLine.

More information on the Diocese of Harrisburg’s efforts to protect youth is at www.YouthProtectionHBG.com.

“I have a zero-tolerance policy with respect to child sexual abuse. We send every and all complaints to the proper legal authorities. The safety and well-being of our children is too important not to take immediate and definitive action.”

— BISHOP RONALD W. GAINER
Bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg
Janet A. McNeal, a retired Captain who successfully ran the Megan's Law Section of the Pennsylvania State Police, will oversee the Diocese of Harrisburg's Safe Environment and youth protection programs. McNeal is an independent contractor with the Diocese. Through her firm, Law and Grace Consulting, she will review the Diocese's current youth protection programs, develop programs and policies to make any needed improvements and will serve as our Safe Environment Coordinator.

“Captain McNeal brings a wealth of experience with her,” said Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. “As a contractor with the Diocese, she is a neutral party, with no conflicts of interest, who has dedicated her entire professional career to seeing that justice is served and survivors of a range of crimes, but specifically sexual crimes, are heard and supported. As part of her role, Capt. McNeal will review every clergy child abuse case reported to the Diocese, in order to evaluate what went wrong and help us continue improving our youth protection policies and trainings, as a means of reducing the risk for future abuse.”

McNeal brings 26 years of law enforcement investigative and policy development experience to this position. She has a three year contract with the Diocese and will operate independently, reporting her recommendations directly to Bishop Gainer. In addition to reviewing every case reported to the Diocese, McNeal will also meet with survivors to hear their stories and determine what stage they are at in the healing process.

“I’m a mother, a grandmother, a police officer, a Protestant and I’ve dealt with sex offenders for most of my career,” McNeal said. “I’m here for the survivors. I want to hear their stories, learn what stage of healing each survivor is at and work with them so they are no longer a victim of abuse, but are victorious at finding healing. Already in my short time working with the Diocese, it is clear that Bishop Gainer is serious about correcting the mistakes of the past, ensuring survivors receive the support they need and securing the safety of our children.”

McNeal will also work with parish pastors/administrators, parish staff, school administrators/principals and appropriate Diocesan department heads to ensure that all adults who come in contact with minors are effectively screened and trained, according to the Diocese’s regulations, policies and procedures. She will also ensure that children in the Diocese’s Catholic schools and Religious Education programs participate in the required Safe Environment training program.

As the chief administrator for the Megan’s Law Sexual Offender Registry for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, McNeal oversaw the operations of the department, including developing policies and procedures, developing a plan to automate the offender registration process and overseeing the development of the offender website. McNeal has also served on crisis response teams and ecumenical taskforces for the United Methodist Church and is a licensed private investigator.

To learn more about McNeal and the steps the Diocese has taken to reduce the risk of abuse, please visit www.YouthProtectionHBG.com.
The Church deeply cares for survivors of sexual abuse. The foremost concern of the Diocese is for survivors and their emotional and spiritual welfare. **We have and will continue to offer survivors immediate loving and compassionate care, regardless of when the abuse occurred.** Below are ways the Diocese of Harrisburg has and will continue to support abuse survivors.

### Survivor Compensation Program

This program will expedite the claims process so survivors can receive compensation much faster than going through the court system. Our expectation is that survivors will complete a claims form, and after review by an administrator, the Diocese will be informed how much compensation each survivor is to receive.

The Survivor Compensation Program will provide financial resources and other assistance to survivors, as an addition to the services already being provided, in early 2019. This program is independent of the Diocese.

The funding for this program will come from the Diocese’s available assets, including investments, earnings from investments and recovery from insurance. In addition, the Diocese will also borrow money and, if needed, will sell Diocesan assets to fund this program.

Our goal is to do all we can to provide compensation to survivors without asking our parishioners to contribute.

### Spiritual & Mental Health Assistance

- All survivors are offered spiritual, pastoral, and mental health assistance, regardless of their ability or willingness to pay (cf. USCCB Charter, art. 1);

- If the Diocese does not appear to have legal liability in a case, and the abuse has been established, the expenses for the survivor’s therapy are the responsibility of the accused. The Diocese will assist in obtaining a financial commitment from the accused to the extent possible. If the offending cleric or employee is unwilling to pay, the Bishop may compel the accused to pay to the extent possible under canon and civil law, even by means of garnishing wages;

- If the offending cleric is from an Institute or Society of Consecrated Life or another Diocese, the cleric’s Superior or Bishop will be asked to pay for the survivor’s counseling expenses;

- In no instance will appropriate counseling assistance be denied due to an inability to pay on the part of the offending cleric, Diocese, or Institute or Society of Consecrated Life.

- The Diocese may offer financial assistance as part of its pastoral outreach to survivors. Any financial assistance will be offered for counseling, provided by a mutually agreed upon and properly credentialed therapist. **At no time will the survivor be left without financial assistance to help pay for needed therapy.**

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If you have suffered abuse at the hands of a clergy member or any other individual, please report your abuse by calling **Child Line at 1-800-932-0313.** Please also report the abuse to the **Diocese by calling 1-800-626-1608 or ReportAbuse@hbgdiocese.org.** It is important to report abuse to both law enforcement and the Diocese so we may take immediate action regarding the accused.
We Pledge...

A Commitment to Financial Stewardship

This past year was challenging for the Diocese and for each one of our members. As we enter 2019, new opportunities present themselves for the Diocese to continue forward on our pledge of transparency.

Many questions have been raised about the financial status of the Diocese, especially during the past several months. Detailed on this page is a condensed financial report for the Diocese of Harrisburg for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018. Our total unrestricted revenues and gains for the year was $36.1 million, with total expenses and losses coming in at $35.3 million. We encourage you to review a more detailed financial report, available at www.hbgdiocese.org, for a complete picture of the Diocese's financial status.

As the recipient of your generosity, the Diocese takes the responsibility of carefully managing your gifts very seriously. We are committed to the highest standards of good stewardship, accountability and transparency. While we have had financial challenges this year, through the good stewardship and management of our departments, we ended the 2018 fiscal year able to meet our financial obligations.

We also reassure you that funding for the Survivor Compensation Program will come from the Diocese’s available assets, including investments, earnings from investments and recovery from insurance. In addition, the Diocese will also borrow money and, if needed, sell Diocesan assets to fund this program.

We commit to continue to be good stewards of your financial gifts. By opening your hearts in generous support for the Diocese of Harrisburg, you share in the ministries of prayer and worship, education and service, social concerns and works of charity that would not be possible without your financial generosity.

Revenues as of the Period Ending 06/30/18

Expenses as of the Period Ending 06/30/18
We Pledge... Swift Response to Abuse Reports

The Diocese of Harrisburg takes swift and immediate action to all reports of abuse. These steps, as outlined in the Diocese’s policies, include:

1. Immediate notification to the proper civil authorities including ChildLine and the appropriate District Attorney.
2. Immediate notification to the Youth Protection office and Victim (Survivor) Assistance Coordinator.
3. An Inquiry Coordinator will be appointed to begin the Inquiry process as soon as possible. The Inquiry Coordinator will normally be a canon lawyer if the allegation is against a cleric, seminarian, those in formation toward Holy Orders, or a person in Consecrated Life. If the allegation is against any Church Personnel, the Inquiry Coordinator will be the employer or supervisor of the accused. In such a case, a canon lawyer will offer assistance and advice to the Inquiry Coordinator. The following steps will be followed based on the accused’s status:

- **A Bishop**—Whether serving currently or previously in the Diocese of Harrisburg (or elsewhere), the Diocesan Bishop will refer the matter immediately to the Apostolic Nuncio in Washington, D.C., and will follow the directions of the Nuncio (cf. USCCB Statement of Episcopal Commitment, n.2). The accusation will also be forwarded to the appropriate civil authorities as required by law.

- **A Cleric, Seminarian or Those in Formation toward Holy Orders** – If an accusation of the sexual abuse of a minor is received against any such person, the Program Director is to notify the Diocesan Bishop and the Secretary for Clergy and Consecrated Life (SCCL), or in the case of a seminarian, the Vocation Director, without delay. The Program Director will appoint a canon lawyer as the Inquiry Coordinator. The Preliminary Inquiry will normally begin with the report that is made to the appropriate civil authorities. If the accused is incardinated in or in formation for another diocese, the Program Director, together with the SCCL, will contact the proper bishop of the accused without delay to forward the accusation. It is the expectation of the Diocese of Harrisburg that the proper diocese of the accused will conduct the Preliminary Inquiry (according to their own policy and process).

- **Lay in Consecrated Life** – If an accusation of the sexual abuse of a minor is received against any such person, the Program Director is to notify the Diocesan Bishop and the SCCL without delay. After consultation with civil counsel and the appropriate civil authorities, an internal Inquiry proceeds. Since the accused is not a cleric, but a member of an Institute of Consecrated Life, with his/her own proper Superior, the Program Director, together with the SCCL, will contact the proper Superior of the accused without delay to forward the accusation. It is the expectation of the Diocese that the Institute or Society of the accused will conduct the Preliminary Inquiry (according to their own policy and process).

- **Church Personnel** – If an accusation of the sexual abuse of a minor is received against any Church personnel, the Program Director is to notify the responsible supervisor or employer of the accused of the report without delay. After consultation with civil counsel and the proper civil authorities the Diocese may proceed with an internal Inquiry.

- **Vendor, Independent Contractor or Subcontractor** – If an accusation of the sexual abuse of a minor is received against any of these persons, the Program Director is to forward the report and all known details to the appropriate civil authorities without delay. The Diocese will not conduct any Inquiry into these reports.

- **Sexual Abuse of a Minor by another Minor** – If an accusation of sexual abuse of a minor by another minor is received, the Program Director will assist in identifying the most appropriate and effective response. Such an accusation will not be investigated under this Program, but if it is a reportable offense, will be forwarded without delay to the appropriate civil authority.
The Grand Jury report was extensive. Can you break down the Harrisburg section?

The Grand Jury report named 22 accused Diocesan priests, 3 seminarians and 2 deacons. Of these, 19 are deceased. An additional 8 religious order priests and 6 priests/deacons from other dioceses were also named within the Harrisburg section of the report, as were 4 redacted names. The eight Diocesan priests, deacons and seminarians who are still living have all been removed from ministry.

What services does the Diocese provide to survivors of abuse?

The Diocese’s foremost concern is for healing for survivors. The Diocese offers spiritual, pastoral, and mental health assistance to all survivors of abuse. The Diocese provides the financial means for survivors to receive the counseling services they need. Also, early in 2019, survivors will be able to participate in our Survivor Compensation Program, which will provide additional financial support.

What is the Survivor Compensation Program?

This program, which is independent of the Diocese, will expedite the claims process so that survivors can receive compensation much faster than going through the court system. Our expectation is that survivors will complete a claims form and the Diocese will be informed by a program administrator how much compensation each survivor is to receive. If the survivor agrees to accept that amount, the Diocese must promptly pay.

Where is the money coming from for the Survivor Compensation Program?

The funding for this program will come from the Diocese’s available assets, including investments, earnings from investments and recovery from insurance. In addition, the Diocese will also borrow money and, if needed, will sell Diocesan assets to fund this program.

What does the Diocese currently do when it receives a report of abuse?

The Diocese reports every accusation to ChildLine and to the appropriate District Attorney Office. If law enforcement does not conduct an investigation or indicates to the Diocese that it can conduct its own independent investigation, then the Diocese employs former law enforcement agents to review any such report of abuse. Upon the recommendation from these law enforcement agents, appropriate actions are taken by the Diocese.

Are there any priests still in ministry against whom there is a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor?

No. Any priest with a credible allegation of abuse is permanently removed from ministry. He may not work or volunteer for the Diocese or its parishes, schools, or other programs. He may not celebrate Mass publicly, administer the sacraments, wear clerical garb, or present himself publicly as a priest. Any priest with a credible allegation is also responsible for his own legal expenses.
Why haven't priests been criminally charged for sexual abuse of minors?

In the Diocese of Harrisburg, most of the accused priests are deceased or the laws of our Commonwealth prevent these charges. We do support legislation that would remove the statute of limitations on criminal charges for those who abuse children.

What is the Diocese Youth Protection Program?

This program is a comprehensive policy detailing the Diocese’s youth protection program. It explains how abuse reports should be made; who needs clearances and which types of clearances; prevention programs in place; outreach to survivors; how reports of abuse will be handled; and the roles of various Diocesan offices in the implementation of the program. The full policy can be found on our website, www.YouthProtectionHBG.com.

What screening is in place for priests which have already been ordained?

Each member of the clergy, as well as all the Diocese’s staff, volunteers and vendors, must fulfill all state requirements for background checks and training programs. All clergy must obtain PA State Police, PA Child Abuse History and an FBI fingerprint check every five years. Clergy from outside the Diocese have to provide current clearances or obtain these clearances before they can begin their service here. Also, clergy from outside the United States, in addition to the clearances previously mentioned, also have to have an Interpol clearance check.

What is the screening process for seminarians?

The application process includes a written statement of the candidate’s discernment history; an autobiography; a review of the candidate’s work, school, and financial history and understanding of the pillars of the Catholic Faith; completed State Police and FBI background checks and state-certified safe-environment training; four to six letters of recommendation; an in-depth physical examination; and a full psychological evaluation, completed over a two-day period.

What is the training process for seminarians today?

After acceptance into the seminary, which is in itself an intensive process, each candidate will spend the next 6 to 9 years preparing for the priesthood. Each candidate has a formation advisor he meets with regularly to ensure he meets the many goals required of him, including his healthy psychological maturing. Each man undergoes a full psychological evaluation a second time, halfway through his time in formation, in order to help explore where he has grown and areas where he still needs help. Seminarians also participate in 6-8 summer/yearly pastoral experiences. With each experience, we require five or six members of the parish to complete an evaluation for these men. At the end of every year, the seminary’s formation team meets to examine each candidate carefully, to determine whether to vote him through to the next year or to ordination. Each seminarian knows that the Diocese can dismiss him for various reasons, but most especially in breaching the code of conduct expected of him. The bar is not set at “do not sin,” but at “be beyond reproach.”

Does the Diocese of Harrisburg engage in confidentiality agreements with survivors?

No. The Diocese of Harrisburg has not engaged in confidentiality agreements since 2002. Bishop Gainer, in an effort to bring healing and transparency, has waived the confidentiality agreements of any settlements previous to 2002.

What is the Diocese’s stance on Pennsylvania’s Statute of Limitations?

The Diocese has previously said that we do support a reform in the State’s Statue of Limitation laws going forward, which would allow survivors a longer time to make reports and receive compensation, so long as any changes are not in violation of the Commonwealth’s Constitution.

What should I do if I have suffered abuse?

Please report your abuse by calling ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. And also report the abuse to the Diocese by calling 1-800-626-1608 or ReportAbuse@hbgdiocese.org. It is important to report abuse to both law enforcement and the Diocese so we may take immediate action regarding the accused.
Mission Statement:
To proclaim the goodness of God
and to make truly present and active
the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ
to all people through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Diocese of Harrisburg at a Glance

- Established March 3, 1868
- 15 Counties (Adams, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Union and York.)
- 7,660 Square Miles
- 89 Parishes

- 7 Missions
- 230,000 Total Catholic Population
- 98 Diocesan Priests
- 33 Retired Diocesan Priests
- 31 Religious Order Priests
- 63 Permanent Deacons
- 1 Religious Brother

- 177 Women Religious
- 26 Seminarians
- 5 Secondary Schools
- 2 K-12 Schools
- 33 Elementary Schools
- 1 Catholic Hospital

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