# Diocese of OWENSBORO

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## Our Diocese

## Our Faith

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# Background

# Keeping Children Safe

In June 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops created the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which provides a comprehensive framework for addressing allegations of sexual abuse and for creating safe environments in parishes and schools, and it directs all sexual abuse polices and procedures in the Diocese of Owensboro.

This Charter led to the creation of the Office of Safe Environment, which works for the protection of children, young people and other vulnerable individuals who have been entrusted to the care of our parishes, schools, religious education classes and other diocesan programs. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse.

A Safe Environment Coordinator position exists to oversee the many programs designed to create the safest environment for minors. Approximately 27,000 rigorous, required background checks have been conducted for clergy, lay personnel and volunteers in parishes and ministries. More than one million dollars has been spent on training and background checks since 2002 and more than 84,000 children and youth in the Diocese of Owensboro have received abuse prevention training.

For more information, visit the Diocese of Owensboro Safe Environment web page.

Many more resources on this topic are available on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website at www.usccb.org.

# Allegations

The Diocese of Owensboro was founded in 1937 and since then, there have been a total of 366 priests who have served in the Diocese in some capacity. Out of these 366 priests, the Diocese has received a total of 71 allegations by 66 individuals

against 30 priests. Eleven of the 30 priests were deceased at the time the allegation was made. Only four allegations were for incidents that occurred after 2002.

From those 30 priests with allegations, 15 priests had substantiated allegations. There were 50 substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made by 46 individuals.

Since the Charter was established 17 years ago, the Diocese has had a policy of zero tolerance. In the event of an allegation of abuse, the Diocese takes immediate action to notify and cooperate with civil authorities, temporarily suspends the priest from public ministry and conducts an internal investigation.  When an allegation is substantiated by the Diocesan Review Board, the priest is then permanently removed from public ministry.

A Diocesan Review Board of highly qualified professionals advises the Bishop in any matters of sexual abuse of minors and monitors the implementation of our sexual abuse policies.

## Pastoral Assistance and Outreach

Two Pastoral Assistance Coordinators (English and Spanish-speaking) help victims and survivors of abuse with compassion, respect and dignity. The Diocese has reached out pastorally and professionally, not only to victims and survivors but also to their families. More than $285,000 has been spent for counseling to victims and their families. Since 1968, when the Diocese began its partnership with Catholic Mutual Insurance, a little more than $620,000 has been paid in assistance and settlements to victims of child sexual abuse.

The Diocese of Owensboro urges individuals who have been sexually abused by anyone acting in the name of the Church to report abuse directly to law enforcement, including calling the Kentucky Child Protection Hot Line: 1-877-KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331 (Toll Free) or contact your local Commonwealth Attorney.

To report abuse to the Diocese, current or past, by anyone acting in the name of the Church, please call and speak confidentially to one of our Pastoral Assistance Coordinators via our 24-hour phone lines: 270-852-8380 for Louanne Payne in English and 270-880-8360 for Nuria Elizondo in Spanish. You may also visit our Safe Environment web page for more information.

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