

## DIOCESE OF BUFFALO OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

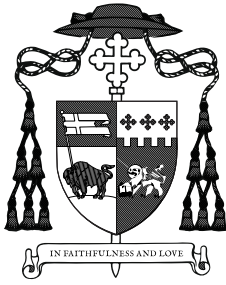
June 2025

Greetings in Christ!

The Diocese again acknowledges that innocent children of God have been gravely harmed in the past by unconscionable acts of child sexual abuse by some members of the clergy who presented themselves as servants of the Church. To these men and women, we continue to offer our full and heartfelt apology for the abuse that was inflicted and the suffering they endured. The Diocese must, and will, continue to work to reconcile with those who have experienced the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain of abuse and who feel betrayed by Church leadership, and to provide support that may help them heal from the wounds inflicted upon them.

As I stated last year in this letter addressing the Auditor's report, we must also look forward and vigilantly protect against further abuse and suffering. The Diocese continues to take steps to ensure that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated and, since 2002, has adhered to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In accordance with the Charter, the Diocese removes priests from ministry who have substantiated claims of child sexual abuse. The Diocese has also memorialized important components of its child-protection policies in the 29 Commitments in the Stipulated Final Order ("SFO") that are the subject of this independent audit.

After a thorough, independent, and transparent audit, the Auditor has determined, for a second year, that the Diocese has remained in full compliance with each of the SFO's 29 Commitments. The Auditor has also once again determined that the Diocese has in place effective internal controls—implemented with appropriate oversight, management, and personnel—to ensure compliance with all of the Commitments in the SFO, for the entire process from the reporting of a Complaint through reporting to authorities, any investigation and determination by an Independent Review Board, and all associated recordkeeping requirements. As the Auditor sets forth in Section II, "Audit Objective and Scope" of this Audit Report, the Diocese has again fully cooperated with the Audit and there were "no limitations imposed on the Auditor by the Diocese in any manner throughout the Audit." The Diocese has also continued to provide all of the information, pertinent documents for each Commitment, and access to all the personnel necessary to conduct the Audit, as described in Section V, "Audit Process and



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Methodology” and Appendix B, “Materials Reviewed.” For a second year, the Auditor and her Independent Audit Team interviewed the full range of Diocesan personnel who are responsible for executing the Diocese’s child-protection policies and the Independent Review Board Chairperson, and they also made on-site visits to the Diocese’s administrative offices and to other locations throughout the Diocese.

The Auditor’s discussion of the audit results for each Commitment, and the accompanying charts in the Audit Report, reflect that the Diocese personnel charged with executing the Diocese’s child-protection policies are continuing to do diligent and critical work to ensure that the Diocese is complying with all of the Commitments. These individuals include, among others, the members of the Independent Review Board and its Chairman, the Safe Environment Coordinator, the Victim Assistance Coordinator, the Child Protection Policy Coordinator, the Diocese’s Vicar for Clergy, and the Monitor for the Priest Supervision Program. I give my heartfelt gratitude for the important work that all of these dedicated people are continuing to do to ensure that the Diocese is following through on its comprehensive commitments to protect children.

I also once again thank the Auditor, Dr. Kathleen McChesney, and the members of her Independent Audit Team for conducting and reporting on this Compliance Audit of the Diocese of Buffalo, for the Second Audit Period. Their efforts have been thorough, and they have continued to bring their considerable professional skill and experience to this audit process.

The conclusion of the Auditor that the Diocese has, for the second year in this process, remained in compliance with each of the child-protection policies and procedures embodied in the SFO’s 29 Commitments is another important step in the Diocese’s ongoing efforts to ensure that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. We will continue to pray for the healing of those who have been harmed and for forgiveness for what they have endured.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher  
*Bishop of Buffalo*