

## **January 17, 2006 Statement of The Catholic Diocese of Jackson Concerning William Wiebler**

William Wiebler, a priest of the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, has admitted to sexually abusing children in Iowa in the 1970's and 1980's. Because of this, he is no longer allowed to function anywhere as a priest.

William Wiebler was employed by the Sacred Heart League as a writer from 1985 to 1989. He was not employed as a priest and did not live in any church facility. He lived in a private residence in the area of Walls and Hernando, Mississippi. Neither the Sacred Heart League nor the Diocese of Jackson had any knowledge of his previous sexual misconduct. And no one has ever reported any sexual misconduct by William Wiebler during his time in Mississippi.

The Diocese of Jackson urges anyone who has ever been sexually abused by church personnel to please contact our Victim's Assistance Coordinator, Mrs. Linda Raff, 601-355-8634 ext. 728, or the Vicar General, Rev. Elvin Sunds, 601-969-1880.

Sexual misconduct by church personnel violates human dignity and the mission of the Church. On a national level, in 2002, the Catholic Church in the United States addressed the misconduct issues by adopting the Charter for the Protection of Children and the procedures for implementing the Charter, the "Norms." In addition to requiring mandatory safeguards, the Charter and Norms provided for an audit of each diocese to ensure that the adequate policies and procedures to protect the children of the Church. Audits of all of the dioceses were conducted in 2003 and 2004.

In November of 2004, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to authorize a third round of audits of every diocese in the United States to determine whether they established and are maintaining mandatory safeguards for children and discipline plans for guilty church personnel. The Bishops' Conference also approved collecting data on new abuse claims, litigation and related costs. In order to deter and prevent future abuse, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice has been hired to provide follow-up research and to manage another study to analyze the reasons for abuse by church personnel. The Bishops' Conference expects to release the results of the study next October. In addition, the Bishops confirmed that they intend upon continuing the ban on Church work for abusive priests.

Beginning in 1985, the Diocese of Jackson implemented a written policy and procedure regarding reporting and handling of sexual misconduct claims for lay and church personnel. The Diocese of Jackson passed the 2003 and 2004 audits and received commendations for its programs established to prevent abuse and to investigate claims of abuse by church personnel. Some of the Diocesan programs receiving commendation were implemented in 1985.

The Diocese is committed to ensuring that children being served by the Church are not at risk of sexual abuse by church personnel. The spiritual well-being of all victims, their families, and others in the community is of particular concern to the Church. For more information about these policies and procedures, we encourage you to visit the diocesan website at [www.jacksondiocese.org](http://www.jacksondiocese.org) and click under “Protecting God’s Children.”