Slide 1- Prezi

2014 ANNUAL NATIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROGRESS REPORT

Good morning your Eminences, your Excellencies, distinguished visitors and guests. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning.

My name is Dr. Francesco Cesareo. I am the Chairman for the National Review Board. As you know, the National Review Board was created in 2002, under article 10 of *the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, to collaborate with the USCCB to prevent the sexual abuse of minors by persons in the service of the Church. Since its inception, the NRB has advised the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People on matters of child and youth protection, specifically on policies and best practices. We also oversee the annual audit process prescribed in the *Charter.* The members of the NRB are committed to collaborating with the bishops in their ongoing response to the problem of sexual abuse of minors within the church. Today, I will give you a brief progress report.

Slide 2 shows video screen

This past April, during Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection created an infographic as a form of outreach to educate the faithful on the Church's efforts to prevent the sexual abuse of

minors and to encourage them to participate in these initiatives. I will now share this with you.

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YouTube – "April is Child Abuse Prevention Month" (run time 1:08)

Slide 4

Progress! The Church has made great strides in protecting children and reaching out to victims.

We continue to slowly make progress. This ongoing work that continues to be carried out by your front line personnel, your pastors, priests and school principals, DREs and catechists, chancery and diocesan employees is to be commended.

Your "Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal" is being communicated at the national level and is being accounted for through the implementation of the *Charter*, the annual audits, and through the numerous programs that are in place to insure safe environments for our children.

You should commend yourselves for this outstanding work!

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RESIST Complacency! Remain Committed.

But I urge you, to not be content with what we have done so far! There is still much work to be done. Every time we learn about a situation that results from a decision not in conformity with the *Charter*, the

commendable efforts of the bishops to address the issue of sexual abuse are compromised. These instances further erode the credibility of the bishops. Protection of children must be the overarching guiding principle. Not only will this create a safe environment within the Church but it will also restore the faithful's trust in the leadership of the bishops. It is for this reason that the NRB believes that safety and monitoring plans for priests who have been permanently removed from ministry but remain in the clerical state, or priests placed on restricted ministry, are important and need to be part of the audit process.

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The NRB continues to prioritize those goals which will help us remain committed and to assist you in the implementation of the Charter.

For example

Priority One: Participate in the Charter Revision

- We continue to work with the *Charter* revision work group. The NRB has continued to study the *Charter* and has made suggestions for improving the document from the perspective or experiences within the last decade that have pointed out areas of concern that are not addressed in the *Charter* or that remain ambiguous. Ambiguity is a problem and has the potential to fail to address an incident of sexual abuse.

Priority Two: Identify and Share Best Practices

- The audit process provides information on the practices employed throughout diocese/eparchies related to the implementation of the

Charter or going beyond what is required by the *Charter* which might be helpful to dioceses/eparchies. In addition, the NRB will seek to identify other existing entities that are involved in the issue of child sexual abuse to form relationships with them so as to use them as a resource for best practices that might be applicable and appropriate within a Church setting.

Priority 3: Assess the Effectiveness of the Audit

- Since the audit is the means by which the NRB monitors the continued implementation of the *Charter* and the compliance of dioceses with that implementation, we want to be sure that the audit instrument, along with the audit itself, is effective in determining compliance, which in turn creates a safe environment within the Church. As the NRB has stated on numerous occasions, there is a need to include parish audits since that is "where the rubber meets the road." As a means for you to assess and gain a better understanding of how the charter is being lived out on the parish level, this year a survey monkey parish assessment tool is being offered to those dioceses that will undergo an on-site audit as an option to assist you. We envision this tool as a way to help you prepare for your on-site audit. We hope you will see this tool as a resource for your parishes as a means to thoroughly assess their safe environment effectiveness, allegation reporting, and their victim assistance effectiveness, to ensure a culture of reliability. The results of using this tool will not impact a determination of compliance.

- As we assess the audit itself, I want to plant a seed for your consideration – is the audit, as it currently stands, meeting the needs of honestly assessing *Charter* compliance in dioceses/eparchies? It is important that we continue to update the audit, so that it will be consistent with your charter revisions.

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The Four C's: Competence, Courage, Consistency, Compassion

If you find yourself at the Conference in DC, drop by the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. There you will find posted on their wall these four words.

Our mission is simple and may be accomplished if we are able to apply these four words.

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Competence

The NRB has commissioned through its Research and Trends committee a ***Safe Environment Efficacy Study***.

This study is looking at how effective our Safe Environment Programs have been – in other words, what is the level of retention that our children, clergy, employees, parents and volunteers have regarding the safe

environment courses that they've received? What are the signs of grooming? Who do you first contact if you reasonably suspect abuse? Who is a mandated reporter and what does that mean?

As some of you may know, the second project is the ***Root Cause Analysis Project*** – This very important study is based on the practice of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, Naval Aviation, Hospitals, and many other high risk entities.

This work requires an analysis of why accidents happen and why things go wrong. Are clear communication and expectations understood? Are employees and volunteers empowered to put into play the protocol/procedures when an allegation is reported? Is the Code of Conduct understood and evenly applied to all settings that involve children and youth? An initial training was held in Philadelphia in February 2014 where 20 dioceses were represented from across the country. The SECs who participated in this training volunteered to be part of this training as a result of an invitation made at the 2013 SEC/VAC meeting in San Francisco. The participants received initial training in Root Cause Analysis and this group is currently working to develop materials for broader use by SECs and VACs.

The Charter Revision continues honest dialogue of providing a roadmap to dioceses and eparchies. This document continues to improve and is seen as a model of what can be done in dealing with offenders and those who are victimized.

Nominations to the NRB by the bishops are critical to the effectiveness of this body. Your recommendations and submittals of highly qualified,

dedicated and devoted men and women as potential members of the National Review Board are to be commended – thank you for this. Typically, 3 vacancies per year are filled from the pool of candidates that you nominate. I encourage you to respond to the call for nominations so that we may have a strong pool of candidates to make recommendations to the President of the USCCB. Your nominations for membership to this board are indicative of your support of the NRB and the seriousness with which you place on the protection of children. The strength of the NRB ensures a positive working relationship between ourselves, the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, and the full body of bishops.

Slide 9 (9.1, 9.2, 9.3)

Courage

9.1 The word "audit" is a friendly word. StoneBridge continues to work with us in making sure that we are carrying out the implementation of our *Charter* and that the audit itself will be beneficial to your efforts in the protection of children. It has proven to be a helpful tool to many bishops in addressing this issue.

9.2 I encourage you to consider including parish audits during your on-site audits, if your diocese does not conduct parish audits on its own. During this past audit cycle, there was a 44% increase in parish audits!

9.3 This translates to 26 more dioceses including parish audits during the on-site visit. The NRB is grateful to those bishops who have incorporated parish audits into this important process. Perhaps the

new parish assessment tool being provided this year will result in an increase in the number of dioceses including parish audits in the on-site audit. Might we double the number to include an additional 40-50 dioceses in the upcoming audit?

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Consistency

This year CARA has agreed to do their survey parallel to our audit time frame. What this means is that the CARA survey will be collecting your numbers between July 1st and June 30th just like our audit. The numbers will now be consistent and hopefully there will be no need to explain to the press and the faithful why the numbers do not match!

Consistency must also apply to the implementation of the Charter when addressing credible allegations of sexual abuse.

In 2013, 64 dioceses/eparchies participated in on-site audits and 127 dioceses/eparchies participated in data collections. Regretfully, one diocese and 3 eparchies elected not to participate in the audit. I am pleased to report that 2 eparchies that did not participate in the past, elected to do so this year. It is imperative that 100% of the dioceses/eparchies participate in the audit in order to ensure that children are safe in all dioceses/eparchies across the nation.

The annual report tracks hundreds of new complaints annually, the vast majority of which occurred in the past, along with current credible allegations by current minors. This demonstrates that the process which you have put in place through the charter is effective as victim assistance coordinators are responding to victims who are coming forward.

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Compassion

Last month I had the privilege of participating in the 2014 Annual SEC/VAC Conference hosted by the Diocese of Nashville. I was humbled by the women and men who came to this conference – all very dedicated and motivated to helping their bishops carry out his "Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal".

The NRB recognizes, as you do, the commitment of these individuals who represent the front lines in addressing this issue on a regular basis. We appreciate the support and trust that you give them in the carrying out of their responsibilities.

During this conference, I was able to listen to the accounts told of heartache and pain, denial and anger, consolation and healing, reconciliation and hope. You should be very proud of your Victim Assistance and Safe Environment Coordinators! They are sharing the face

of Christ and helping to rebuild relationships, trust and faith in our Church and her clergy.

Next year's conference is being hosted by the Diocese of Covington and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and the Archdiocese of Denver has graciously offered to host the conference in 2016.

We encourage you to support the participation of your SECs and VACs at these conferences because they are beneficial for their own professional development. These conferences provide opportunities for collegiality and support among this group, providing them with an environment in which they can learn from one another, understand what their counterparts are dealing with, and networking and collaboration between dioceses. In addition, this type of gathering provides SECs and VACs a chance to step back from the stresses of their work to recharge both spiritually and emotionally as they come together to pray and socialize. Participants also learn about the successes and efforts of their bishops through the support of their work. Finally, from the perspective of the NRB, these conferences provide the opportunity to gain knowledge from those who engage in the work of creating safe environments and assisting victims that benefits our own deliberations and work.

Final Slide

Your continued support of the NRB and its efforts to collaborate with you and to assist you in restoring trust with the faithful is greatly appreciated. Our efforts to create a safe environment must be never ending since even 1 case of sexual abuse of a child by a cleric is one case too many. Together we have embarked on a journey that calls for a particular type of

servant leadership that flows from the courage to be diligent in the carrying out of your commitment to protect children through a steadfast adherence to the charter: to the need to act swiftly and consistently when an allegation comes to the surface; to hold each other accountable for any actions or decisions that run contrary to the charter.

If society is honest, the church has taken serious steps in response to the sexual abuse crisis. It truly is a beacon of light in the darkness of this unspeakable act. Your continued leadership on this issue will not only benefit the church but society at large since we know that this issue is not an issue unique to the Catholic Church but permeates families and institutions of all types. The NRB is committed to providing you with our best advice as we challenge you, assist you, and support you, in your efforts to create a safe environment for our children. Thank you for this opportunity to address you this morning.