



October 17, 2017

Most Reverend George L. Thomas
Bishop of Helena
P.O. Box 1729
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Bishop Thomas:

Based on the results of our recently performed on-site audit of the Diocese of Helena, the Diocese has been found compliant with all audited Articles within the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* for the 2016/2017 audit period.

The conclusions reached as to the compliance of your Diocese are based upon inquiry, observation and the review of specifically requested documentation furnished to StoneBridge Business Partners during the course of this audit.

Thank you for your cooperation during this process.

Sincerely,

StoneBridge Business Partners

StoneBridge Business Partners
Rochester, New York

cc: Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection
Sr. Rita McGinnis, Pastoral Planning Services Director, Diocese of Helena



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P.O. Box 1729
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Bishop Thomas:

In accordance with our recent audit of the Diocese of Helena, the following issues are being brought to your attention. These issues do not affect your compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*; they are simply suggestions for your consideration.

Article 12 & 13:

Issue: Although the Diocese is in communication with parishes and schools throughout the year regarding the status of safe environment programs, parish audits are not currently performed. Therefore, the Diocese relies largely on parish staff and volunteers to ensure program compliance and accurate reporting.

Suggestion: We suggest that the Diocese consider the feasibility of implementing a process to periodically visit parish and school locations in order to review documentation and assess compliance with the safe environment program requirements. This would allow the Diocese to gain a better understanding of how policies and procedures are being implemented at the parish and school level and assist in ensuring compliance with safe environment requirements.

Issue: The Diocese does not require clergy, employees, and volunteers to renew their background checks.

Suggestion: We suggest that the Diocese consider implementing a policy for renewing background checks for all clergy, employees, and volunteers on a periodic basis (suggested every 5 to 7 years). This would ensure that the Diocese has the most up to date information on individuals working with children.

Issue: The Diocese was unable to provide evidence of a formal promulgation from the Bishop of the safe environment programs utilized by the Diocese.

Suggestion: We suggest that the Bishop review the safe environment training program being offered and issue a formal statement expressing that they are approved and in accord with Catholic moral principles.

By signing below, you attest that you have read and received our suggestions for the 2016/2017 *Charter Audit* process.

Most Reverend George L. Thomas
Bishop of Helena

Thank you for the efforts that you are taking to protect the children and young people in the Diocese of Helena. Please return a signed copy via email to swood@stonebridgebp.com at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

StoneBridge Business Partners

StoneBridge Business Partners
Rochester, New York

cc: Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection
Sr. Rita McGinnis, Pastoral Planning Services Director, Diocese of Helena