



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF EDMONTON EARNS HONOUR FOR ABUSE PREVENTION PRACTICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Edmonton, March 6, 2017 _ The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton has been awarded Praesidium Accreditation®, an honour that publicly demonstrates that it has worked to achieve the highest standards in abuse prevention.

At the direction of Archbishop Richard Smith, the Archdiocese has worked since 2010 with Praesidium, an international leader in abuse risk management, to promote safe environments and best practices in abuse prevention at its parishes and institutions.

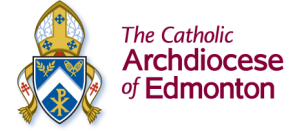
To attain accreditation, the Archdiocese underwent a rigorous risk assessment to review and scrutinize eight primary operational areas: policies, screening and selection, training, monitoring and supervision, community participation, internal feedback systems, responding, and administrative practices. Its assessment results were benchmarked against 800 best practice standards and empirically based data collection methods to assess the risk of abuse in an organization.

The Archdiocese will be accredited for three years, and during this time will uphold fundamental organizational values and stringent safety practices that demonstrate its commitment to protecting those in their care from abuse. It is the first diocese in Canada to attain Praesidium Accreditation.

Each bishop of a Canadian diocese is responsible for responding to any abuse cases brought to his attention and also for ensuring secure pastoral environments for minors and vulnerable persons as well as for volunteers and personnel involved in pastoral ministry.

“Today we are really recognizing many years of hard work and dedication that have led to this accreditation, and we are reinforcing the message that abuse will not be tolerated in our churches and institutions,” said Archbishop Smith. “It’s simply non-negotiable.”

“We are committed to ensuring that any archdiocesan employee, priest or lay volunteer who offends against children or other vulnerable persons is promptly removed from ministry, that any offences are immediately reported to civil authorities, and that victims receive an apology, compassion, and assistance in recovering from any harm they have suffered, including compensation where appropriate.”



Over the last six years, approximately 12,000 priests, deacons, seminarians, staff, and lay volunteers across the Archdiocese have received training in abuse awareness and prevention through the Called to Protect® program developed by Praesidium.

Comprehensive policies on abuse are posted on the archdiocesan website, and screening procedures for all staff and volunteers have been strengthened.

A confidential means of reporting abuse is available through the website or a toll-free phone number 877-770-6777.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton includes 124 parishes and missions across central and northern Alberta. It also operates a theological college, seminary, two youth camps, and five cemeteries. About 403,000 Catholics live within its boundaries, and 98 priests serve in active parish ministry or other diocesan positions. Find more information at caedm.ca.

Praesidium is a Texas-based firm that specializes in abuse risk management and has helped thousands of organizations over the last two decades. More information about Praesidium Accreditation® is available at PraesidiumInc.com or by calling 800.743.6354.

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