

**August 25, 2005 Statement of
The Catholic Diocese of Jackson
Concerning Mr. James E. Trichell**

Mr. James E. “Jamie” Trichell was employed by the Vicksburg Catholic School System as a part-time employee from 2001-2004. During his time at the school, neither the Diocese nor the school received any accusations of sexual misconduct regarding Mr. Trichell. Since Mr. Trichell’s departure in 2004, the Diocese has not received any sexual misconduct allegations relating to his work at the school. During his tenure as a part-time employee the Diocese was unaware of any criminal investigations involving Mr. Trichell.

Vicksburg Catholic School is providing counselors for any student who may be disturbed or upset by the news of the allegations against and arrest of Mr. Trichell.

The Diocese of Jackson urges anyone who has ever been sexually abused by church personnel to please contact the 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 and click under “Protecting God’s Children.”

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