

WORLD & NATION

Bishops' sexual-abuse committee expanded

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse has been restructured and expanded.

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, announced the restructuring and named 10 new members Sept. 5.

At their June meeting in Dallas the bishops voted to enlarge the committee by putting a bishop from each of the 14 USC-CB regions on it.

The committee prepared the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" that the bishops adopted in Dallas. In coming months it has several tasks related to implementing the charter.

Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul-Minneapolis will remain the chairman of the committee.

Previous members who will continue to serve are: Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn. (Region 1); Bishop John R. Gaydos of Jefferson City, Mo. (Region 9); Coadjutor Bishop Joseph A. Galante of Dallas (Region 10); and Bishop George H. Niederauer of Salt Lake City (Region 13).

New appointees include: Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, N.Y. (Region 2); Archbishop Stefan Soroka of the Ukrainian Archdiocese of Philadelphia (Region 3); Auxiliary Bishop W. Francis Malooly of Baltimore (Region 4); Bishop Thomas J. Rodi of Biloxi, Miss. (Region 5); and Bishop James A. Murray of Kalamazoo, Mich. (Region 6).

Also: Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Ill. (Region 7); Bishop Blase J. Cupich of Rapid City, S.D. (Region 8); Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif. (Region 11); Bishop Robert F. Vasa of Baker, Ore. (Region 12); and Bishop Robert J. Baker of Charleston, S.C. (Region 14).

Region 14 — Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas — was formed by the bishops in June by splitting Region 4, which used to cover all Eastern states south of the Mason-Dixon line.

Dropped from the committee in the restructuring were Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark, N.J.; Bishop John B. McCormack of Manchester, N.H.; and Auxiliary Bishop A. James Quinn of Cleveland.

One of the committee's tasks is to develop materials that regions and provinces can use to establish mechanisms for auditing the adherence of dioceses to the new national policies. The child protection charter calls for development of such mechanisms to provide an outside measure of each diocese's performance.

The committee will also prepare for a

meeting with representatives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, a national organization of heads of men's religious orders. The charter calls for such a meeting "to determine how this charter will be conveyed and established in the communities of religious men in the United States."

Another committee project will be to advise bishops on developing what the charter calls "a communications policy that reflects a commitment to transparency and openness."

The announcement on the committee's restructuring said the committee will also "discuss the possibilities for provincial, regional and national victims meetings and its relationship to the National Review Board." The board, an independent, all-lay group, was formed by the charter to monitor and critique the adherence of dioceses to the charter.

In two years the bishops are to review the charter, seeking ways to make it more effective in light of recommendations from the review board.



Reuters/CNS

Floods ravage Thailand

Villagers waded through rising waters in Ban Wan Tong, about 230 miles north of Bangkok, Sept. 6. Floods have ravaged northern and central Thailand killing more than a dozen people and wiping out thousands of acres of farmland. Catholic Relief Services was among agencies that mobilized in late August to help flood victims in Europe and Asia.

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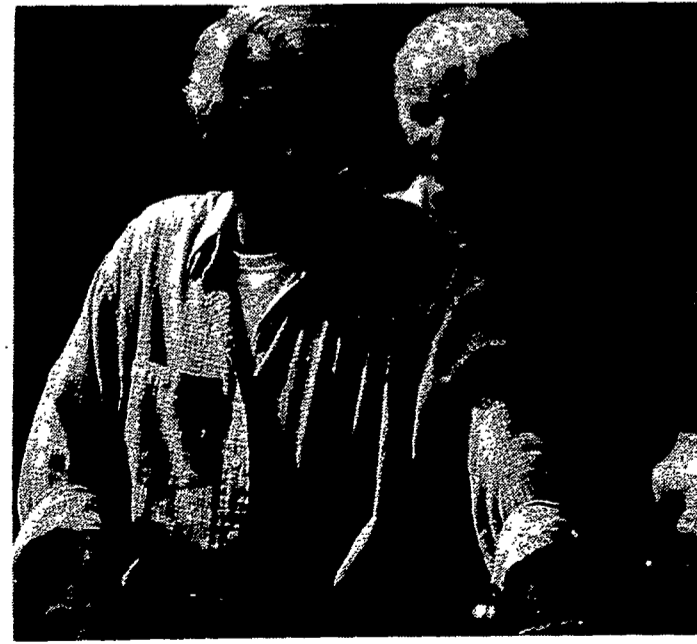


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