



Reuters/CNS

Father mourns sons

Rachamim Alter, center, mourns the loss of his two sons who were among those killed in the suicide bombing attack at an Israeli-owned hotel in Kenya Nov. 28. Their funeral was held Dec. 1 in Petah Tikva in Israel. Sixteen people, including the three bombers, were killed in the blast when a vehicle full of explosives was driven into the hotel lobby.



*They brought help,
comfort and peace to
the precious time
we had left.*

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Catechists, ministers to learn about abuse

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

The Diocese of Rochester has slated a workshop on sexual-abuse awareness for catechetical leaders and youth ministers.

The workshop will be offered from January to April at parishes in Auburn, Cohocton, Geneva, Henrietta, Horseheads, Pittsford and Rochester. The first workshop is slated for Jan. 8 at Rochester's Holy Cross Parish Center.

Such programs were called for by the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," passed in June by the U.S. bishops in response to the scandal of sexual abuse of minors.

"(Dioceses) will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children," states Article 12 of the charter.

The diocesan workshops run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and are designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Help catechetical leaders and youth ministers understand sexual abuse, including characteristics of offenders and the signs of abuse.
- Offer catechetical leaders and youth ministers standards for their own behavior.
- Provide resources for support of abuse victims.
- Provide resources for the education of parents and catechists on sexual abuse.

Workshop presenter Sue Ivancic,

pastoral associate at St. Pius Tenth Parish in Chili, is also a clinical social worker who specializes in child sexual abuse. She noted that abuse headlines this year have changed how people view her clinical work.

"People used to look at me with surprise if they asked about my private practice and really did not want to talk about it," she said. "Now people are very interested and ask a lot of questions."

Ivancic said that combating sexual abuse may take some rethinking on the part of parents. For example, parents should always ask a child if he or she wants to give a hug or a kiss to an adult with whom they do not have regular contact, even if that adult is a relative. This empowers the child to draw boundaries with adults when appropriate, she said.

"We don't want kids to have a common experience of having adults they trust tell them to do something with their body that they don't want to do," she said.

Ivancic previously gave a sexual-abuse awareness presentation to diocesan catechetical leaders at a meeting in September. Her talk prompted a desire for more information on the subject, according to Maribeth Mancini, director of the diocesan office of evangelization and catechesis.

Mancini added that the diocese needs to equip its ministers to deal with the questions raised by the new awareness of sexual abuse.

"Our goal is to provide a safe and happy and holy environment for the children and teenagers in our care," Mancini said.

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