

Catholic Church Is **FBI** Veteran's New Boss

Office Charged With Protecting Children

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WASHINGTON, DC -- The highest-ranking woman in the **FBI** was named yesterday to head a new office for child protection in the Roman Catholic Church, part of the effort by U.S. bishops to restore confidence in the church after months of scandal over sexual abuse by priests.

Kathleen L. McChesney, a veteran of 24 years in the **FBI** and its No. 3 official, is leaving the bureau to become the full-time director of the church's Office for Child and Youth Protection, headquartered in Washington. An arm of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the new office is charged with ensuring the safety of children and teenagers in Catholic churches, schools and youth groups across the country. "I believe that the Catholic Church has suffered because of the acts of a few. I come from an institution in which we also have suffered for the acts of a few," McChesney told reporters, referring to spy scandals that tarnished the **FBI**'s image. "Because of the acts of the few, others . . . must work very hard to restore the trust, the credibility, the faith. And I hope that I can help to do that."

McChesney's appointment, effective Dec. 1, drew cheers from victims' groups and from Voice of the Faithful, a fast-growing organization that formed this year in response to the sex abuse scandal and is seeking a greater role for lay people in governing the church. But the groups expressed concern that she might not be able to take all the steps she sees fit. "The bishops clearly did some research to find a well-qualified person. But the true question remains: How much power will she have when she disagrees with the people who hired her?" said Mike Emerton, spokesman for Voice of the Faithful. McChesney discounted such fears, saying there has been a "sea change" in the church's approach to the problem. "With much involvement of lay boards, with the establishment of an office such as this -- this is really unprecedented, and I think church members should be reassured that something is being done," she said.

Under the sexual abuse policy adopted by the U.S. bishops in Dallas in June, formally called the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, one of the new office's key functions will be to serve as a watchdog over the bishops. McChesney is supposed to work with a National Review Board of prominent lay Catholics, headed by Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating (R), to produce an annual report on compliance with the policy. The charter also calls for McChesney's office to help dioceses teach parents and children how to recognize and prevent sexual abuse. The bishops will gather in Washington next week to vote on revisions to the Dallas policy requested by the Vatican. But those changes, aimed at ensuring fairness for accused priests, do not directly concern McChesney's office.

McChesney, 51, has served since December 2001 as the **FBI**'s executive assistant director for law enforcement services. **FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III** created that job to improve cooperation between federal and local law enforcement agencies in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. McChesney joined the **FBI** in 1978 after seven years as a police detective in Seattle. She rose through the bureau to head its field offices in Chicago and Portland, Ore., and also served as assistant director of the training division in Quantico, Va. She is the latest in a stream of senior officials to leave the **FBI** this year, including its counterterrorism chief, head spokesman and administrative manager. Mueller has replaced all of the top managers he inherited when taking over last year, and McChesney is the second Mueller appointee to leave since then.