

A LETTER TO CARING ADULTS

Dear Caring Adults,

We have a multitude of hopes, aspirations, and dreams for our own children as well as those for whom we are responsible. Given the evil in the world we as adults experience trepidation concerning the well being of our children and youth. We are rightly concerned for their safety in the areas of child abuse, their physical safety, child pornography, and the dangers associated with social websites on the Internet among other threats.

As protectors of our children, we must arm ourselves with knowledge and education in order to overcome the the great evil of child abuse. The Catholic Church, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops through the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and our own Bishop Lynch through the *Diocese of St. Petersburg Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults* have instituted safe environment programs designed to strengthen our resolve in protecting the weakest among our society, our children and vulnerable adults.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he promised not to leave us alone. God left us The Holy Spirit who through the Father pours out his grace as we attempt to lead our children and youth along a path that will allow them to become loving well-adjusted adults who fear the Lord. We are strengthened then in our resolve as caretakers of our children and vulnerable adults with guidance, support, and resources from our Church leadership through the Safe Environment Program.

The Safe Environment Program training and education that we have at our disposal will make us confident and wise as our continuous battle against the advances of sexual predators, child molesters, and sex offenders who are out to harm our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Good preparation and prayer will steel our resolve in protecting the most vulnerable among us.

We must face what is before us with a spirit of compassion and understanding for the abused and gain strength from faith, commitment, and wisdom.

Yours in Christ,

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