

PROMISE TO



Protect

PLEDGE TO

Heal

Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau **Safe Environment**

What has the Catholic Church done to effectively respond to sexual abuse by church personnel?

The Catholic Church has done more to protect children than almost any other organization in the US. Consider:

- Safe Environment training is taking place in 193 dioceses/eparchies of the country. Over 2 million adults have been trained to recognize the behavior of offenders and what to do about it.

- Background checks are conducted on Church personnel who have contact with children. Over 2 million volunteers and employees; 52,000 clerics; 6,205 candidates for ordination have



had their backgrounds evaluated.

- All dioceses/eparchies have Codes of Conduct spelling out what is acceptable behavior. This serves to let people know what can and cannot be done as well as letting others know what behavior can be expected. It encourages the reporting of suspicious behavior.

- All dioceses/eparchies have Victim Assistance Coordinators, assuring victims that they will be heard. In 2009, \$6,536,109 was spent on therapy for the victims of clergy sexual abuse.

- All dioceses/eparchies have Safe Environment Coordinators who assure the ongoing compliance to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

- Bishops are meeting with victims.

- Dioceses/eparchies have Healing Masses, retreats for victim/survivors and other reconciliation events.

- There is a Zero Tolerance policy on abusers since 2002. If a credible accusation is made against a cleric, they are

permanently removed from ministry regardless of how long ago the offense occurred.

- Dioceses/eparchies require intensive background screening as well as psychological testing for those wishing to enter the seminary.

The Catholic Church has worked hard to protect children. Much has been done but more needs to be done. Until child sexual abuse is no longer a part of society, the Church will continue its efforts to stop it.

Did You Know?

Take the Child Safety Quiz

Parents, guardians, and adults who care for children face constant challenges when trying to help keep children safer in today's fast-paced world. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) offers easy-to-use safety resources to help address these challenges. NCMEC's Web site offers a range of practical information for parents and guardians that will help keep children safe from harm. The site also features an interactive quiz on child safety designed for both adults and children. To take the quiz, visit the NCMEC Web site and click on "Child Safety": www.missingkids.com.

For more information: Safe Environment Office, Karen Pesek, Coordinator, Rosie Francka, Assistant
601 S Jefferson Ave, Springfield, MO 65806, (417) 866-0841, kpesek@dioscg.org, www.dioscg.org



Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau **Safe Environment**

Training and education

Article 12 of the Bishop's Charter for the protection of children and youth, "Promise to Protect; Pledge to Heal" requires dioceses to maintain safe environment education programs for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers and others. The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau uses VIRTUS® training programs for children, youth, and adults. www.virtus.org

Evaluation of backgrounds

Article 13 of the Bishop's Charter requires dioceses to evaluate the background of all clergy, parish and school personnel, and other paid personnel, and volunteers who have regular contact with minors. The diocese conducts background evaluations through the Missouri Highway Patrol for criminal activity, Sex Offender registry, interviews and reference checks, and other screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of the potential employee or volunteer.

Responding to victims

Article 1 of the Bishop's Charter requires dioceses to "reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being." The Diocese will reach out to every person who has been the victim of sexual abuse as a minor by anyone acting in the name of the Church, whether the abuse was recent or occurred many years in the past.

This outreach will include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the Diocese. The Assistance Coordinator will aid in the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other diocesan personnel. The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau has two Victim Assistance Coordinators: Kathleen Griesemer, PsyD, (417) 848-4601 and John K. Kreymer, PsyD, DAPA (417) 597-3755, E-mail: psychit2me@hotmail.com

Making a Complaint or an Allegation of Sexual Misconduct

The Diocese supports and encourages the reporting of all incidents of sexual misconduct, regardless of the identity of the alleged offender. The Diocese recognizes that bringing an allegation of sexual misconduct to the attention of church officials can be a difficult decision. To make this process as safe and comfortable as possible, the Diocese has provided

a variety of methods for bringing such a complaint. Any person who alleges sexual misconduct on the part of diocesan personnel may bring a complaint by contacting any one of the following individuals in writing, or by telephone, or in person. Please mark all correspondence Personal and Confidential. Bp. James V. Johnston, or the Chancellor, Msgr. Thomas Reidy, 601 S. Jefferson Avenue, Springfield, MO 65806, (417) 866-0841; Any pastor or parish life coordinator of a parish within the Diocese; one of the Victim Assistance coordinators listed above.

Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy

There are several ways to obtain copies of the policy, which includes codes of conduct for clergy, church and Catholic school employees, and volunteers who regularly work with children:

1. Contact your local parish or school office. The policy is in the diocesan administrative handbook, "Policies, Guidelines and Procedures."
2. Go to www.dioscsg.org, click on "Safe Environment."
3. Contact the diocese at (417) 866-0841.

Review board

Bp. Johnston has identified a group of well educated and skilled professionals to advise the diocese on all matters relating to abuse by clergy. This group includes: Fr. John (J.) Friedel, John Layton, Maura Taylor, and Patricia Wheeler.

