



## Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

Catholic Pastoral Center • 1615 West Washington Street • Springfield, Illinois 62702-4757  
www.dio.org 217-698-8500 FAX 217-698-0802

Office of the Bishop

May 15, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

In continuing the efforts of the U.S. Bishop's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we have a responsibility to keep children safe from the grave harm of child sexual abuse. In the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, all volunteers and employees age 18 years and older are required to attend the training, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*®. This training session assists adults in identifying the warning signs and effects of child sexual abuse, strategies for maintaining a safe environment including review of the diocesan code of conduct, *The Policy on Working with Minors*, and communicating their concerns. In addition, we offer other recommended supplemental training programs in which caring adults can learn to keep children safe on the internet, including topics on youth trends, intervention and prevention strategies and laws regarding cyberbullying and sexting. In doing so, it assists the Catholic Church and its members in defending human life at every stage keeping our parish programs safe for all people.

In addition to training adults to be the eyes, ears and voices to protect children, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois has also had in effect since 2005 a mandated personal safety program for children in the Catholic schools and PSR programs in our diocese. Our commitment is that each child, pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, is educated in self protection, appropriate boundaries, and is able to recognize, resist, and ask for help with unsafe or uncomfortable situations and online communications. These concepts are communicated through various age appropriate training programs all of which are in accord with Catholic moral principles; please see attached list or you may visit the website at [www.dio.org/safeenvironment](http://www.dio.org/safeenvironment) to obtain updated copies or you may request one at [safeenvironment@dio.org](mailto:safeenvironment@dio.org).

Parents are the primary educators of their children. We know that these trainings can involve some sensitive information, so parents are asked to give their approval for their child to attend the personal safety training, and their choice will be honored. But I would urge you to seriously consider allowing your child to attend. To parents, I extend an open invitation to consider attending the trainings with your child so that you can continue the discussion at home and facilitate ongoing reinforcement of what the child has learned through the training. Also available on request is a helpful guide entitled *Virtus™ Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide (booklet, revised 2016)*.

I am grateful for your desire to serve the Lord through your ministries and for your commitment to keep children safe in your communities and in our Church. May God bless you with the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Yours with love in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois