



Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

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Office of the Bishop

May 12, 2014

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 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 12th grade, is educated in self protection, appropriate boundaries, and is able to recognize, resist, and ask for help with unsafe or uncomfortable situations. These concepts are communicated through various age appropriate training programs all of which are in accord with Catholic moral principles.

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 training 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.

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.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Thomas John Paprocki

Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois