We are CALLED

The Church is the Body of Christ. All members of the Church are linked to one another. We all have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children in our parishes, schools, families, and local communities.

Here are five ways you can help keep children safe:

1 DEVELOP APPROPRIATE AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

2 TEACH YOUR CHILDREN SAFETY AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES.

3 KNOW WHO HAS ACCESS TO YOUR CHILDREN.

4 LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE.



5 REPORT ABUSE TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Kristin Eyre, MSW, LISW-CP
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PROMISE to Protect Pledge to HEAL

SECRETARIAT OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

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Washington, DC 20017

202-541-5413

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PROMISE to Protect

The Catholic Church is committed to ensuring the safety of children and young people and providing pastoral outreach to victims and survivors of sexual abuse by clergy.

The Church's mission to protect and heal stems from the Gospel: the life and teachings of Jesus Christ provide us with the perfect foundation for our efforts to create safe environments for children.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt 19:14).

"Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children. They should also know that they have every right to turn to the Church with full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home. Consequently, priority must not be given to any other kind of concern, whatever its nature, such as the desire to avoid scandal, since there is absolutely no place in ministry for those who abuse minors."

—Pope Francis, Letter, Feb. 2, 2015



Pledge to HEAL

The first obligation of the Church with regard to victims is for healing and reconciliation. Dioceses and eparchies continue to reach out to every person who has been a victim of sexual abuse as a minor by anyone in church service, whether that abuse is recent or occurred in the past.

If you suffered abuse, it was not your fault. If you are a victim of sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, or individual representing the Catholic Church, there are several things you can do:

- Contact the appropriate law enforcement agency, which can help determine options for making a criminal complaint.
- Contact a local child protection agency, a private attorney, a support group, an abuse hotline, or a mental health professional.
- Contact a diocesan or eparchial victim assistance coordinator who is available to help victims and survivors make a formal complaint of abuse to the diocese or eparchy, arrange a personal meeting with the bishop or his representative, and obtain support for the needs of the individual and families.



The *CHARTER*

Since 2002, the bishops of the United States have carried out their ministries to protect and heal in all dioceses and eparchies through the implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

The *Charter* directs action on the following matters:

- Outreach and healing to victims and survivors
- Prompt and effective responses to allegations of abuse
- Cooperation with public authorities
- Removal of offenders from ministry
- Safe environment training programs for clergy, employees, volunteers, and children that include information on prevention, identification, and response and reporting of abuse
- Background checks for all clergy, employees, and volunteers that have regular contact with children
- An annual audit of dioceses and eparchies to ensure compliance with *Charter* guidelines

"We remain ever vigilant in the protection of children and the outreach to those most harmed by sexual abuse. The Church cannot become complacent with what has been accomplished."

—USCCB President Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, *2015 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

