

April 1, 2023

*“But who speaks of these things today? Who is capable of taking young people seriously? Who helps them to prepare seriously for a **great and generous love**?”*

Pope Francis in Amoris Laetitia

Dear Parents,

Our culture often presents special challenges in forming our children in a positive and truthful view of the meaning and purpose of human sexuality. It is also true that the Holy Spirit is with us in a special way and that the Church is ready to walk with us as we guide our families in a right understanding of human love so that they can live holy, healthy, and happy lives.

With a view to supporting you in your role as primary educator of your children at this exciting and challenging time, the diocese created a Chastity Education Program that is offered in our Catholic schools. The 5th and 6th grade program consists of five lessons as listed on the Chastity Education Program Overview sheet. **In addition, 5th graders are offered a lesson on the changes of puberty in which girls and boys participate separately. I encourage you to view the video before-hand so that you will be ready to walk through this time of learning with your child. You can find the video at www.eriercd.org/chastity/school.html.** The 7th and 8th grade lessons are based on the text, *Theology of the Body for Teens, Middle School Edition*, by Ascension Press. Additionally, a parent guide is available for 7th and 8th grade lessons. It is highly recommended that each family obtain a copy for use with their children in the home.

Detailed information about sexual development and the intimate act of sexual intercourse will not be taught in the classroom. Each child matures at his/her own rate and parents know best when their child is ready for detailed information.

A Chastity Education Parent Meeting is offered by every school to further assist you in your vital role as primary educator for your children in the area of sexuality. We urge you to attend this meeting. It is designed to

- give you a clear understanding of the classroom lessons,
- support you in your essential role as parent educator, and
- provide a forum where you can discuss with school staff and other parents the issues that are of concern to you and critical to the well-being of your children.

It is my prayer that this program and its resources will be of assistance to you in the fundamental task of providing your child with a positive and prudent education for chaste living. **If you have any questions about the content of the program or your child’s participation, please contact the school.** Additionally, we have been adding to our resources and made several of them available online. Visit <https://www.eriercd.org/chastity/parents.html> for our current list. Also, please feel free to contact me by phone or email with questions or for any additional support you may need. I am here to support you. Know that Jesus himself walks with you and is delighted at your efforts to please him and to raise your children to know and love him. You and your families are in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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