



November 1, 2012

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“In the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that Jesus extended his care in a tender and urgent way to children...: “Let the children come to me” (Mt 19:14). Jesus also uttered a grave warning about anyone who would lead the little ones astray (Mt 18:6). Mindful of these words of the Lord, it is with compassion and care that the Diocese of Erie addresses the issue of child abuse.” (Introduction to the diocesan *Policy for the Protection of Children*)

The original *Policy for the Protection of Children* became effective in the Diocese of Erie in June of 2003. Based on this policy, the diocese has implemented a program addressing the protection of children and youth against all forms of abuse by any clergy, religious or lay person who is employed by or volunteers under the auspices of the diocese.

Our diocesan program is comprehensive in nature, including the completion of applications with references, background checks and inservicing for all individuals who have substantial contact with children and youth. The program also includes safe environment inservicing of our children and youth each year in our Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. Parents of all students also receive information annually regarding safe environments and monthly bulletin announcements are available to inform our larger church community about our efforts to address the problem of child abuse. Our diocesan policy also includes protocols providing effective and caring responses to incidents of abuse.

Our child protection policy has been updated and revised annually since its promulgation and includes the provisions of the Pennsylvania state statutes regarding the reporting of child abuse which were changed in 2007. Our diocesan Child Protection web page has also been re-organized and revised and is updated regularly so that all concerned may have ready access to the resources available for compliance with diocesan mandates.

Therefore, by this letter, I promulgate the continued use of the *Policy for the Protection of Children* in the Diocese of Erie. The mandates contained therein continue to apply to all parishes, schools, offices, agencies and other institutions which operate under the administrative authority of the Bishop, as provided for in Church law.

I pray these efforts will continue to create safe and holy environments for all. I also ask for your continued prayers and vigilance as we invite the children to come to us in safety and in peace.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ *Lawrence T. Persico*

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, J.C.L.
Bishop of Erie

/ks