

KEEPING OUR YOUTH SAFE



As I am sure you are aware, last week, a Grand Jury report investigating child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania was released. I would like to offer my most sincere apologies to all victims, and to the community at large, for this tragic reality. The report brings up painful and uncomfortable issues that we must face together so we can eradicate child sexual abuse from the church altogether.

I know you are all concerned. I share those same concerns and I want to assure you that your child's safety is our highest priority. Our current standards are built upon years of ongoing improvements as we constantly reevaluate and improve our procedures and policies.

HOW DO WE PROTECT OUR CHILDREN?

- All volunteers and employees must have criminal background and child abuse clearances
- Every person is trained extensively on sexual abuse prevention, reporting, victim advocacy and more
- Since 2003, we have trained more than 28,000 adults in child protection awareness
- Every child in kindergarten through 12th grade is taught how to recognize and report inappropriate behavior

HOW DO WE HANDLE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE?

- We strictly adhere to a zero tolerance policy on abuse
- We immediately notify law enforcement of all allegations of abuse
- We notify Pennsylvania Child Line
- We remove abusers from ministry and immediately notify the parish and the public
- And we provide all necessary support to victims, knowing that the healing process can be difficult and lengthy

Once again, I am deeply sorry and grieved for the unsettling nature of the behaviors described in this Grand Jury investigation. I hope we can work together to restore trust in the church and move forward in a more positive way.

If you are in need of resources that can help you discuss these issues with your children, we recommend:

- Catholic Social Services (cssdioceseofscranton.org)
- Darkness to Light (d2l.org)
- Prevent Child Abuse America (preventchildabuse.org)
- Stop It Now! (stopitnow.org)

Thank you and God Bless you.
Bishop Joseph C. Bambera