



St. Thomas the Apostle

Chaldean Catholic Diocese of the U.S.A.

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Bishop's Message Regarding the Protection of Children

July 15, 2018

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

As with every year, St. Thomas the Apostle Chaldean Catholic Diocese presents to the community a yearly message regarding Protecting God's Children Program at our diocese. This message is to be received by all the community through church newsletters, bulletins, and announcements. Its intent is to show that St. Thomas the Apostle Chaldean Catholic Diocese complies with the Dallas Charter of Protecting God's Children.

The church has a duty in maintaining a safe environment for all people of our community. We also have a duty to provide healing and reconciliation for those afflicted by any sexual abuse of minors by any of our clergy, church personnel, or volunteers. We are committed in providing outreach to any person who has been a victim of sexual abuse currently or in the past, and to cooperate with civil authorities and be transparent if such allegations come forth.

As your bishop, I ask and encourage any person who has been sexually abused by anyone of the church to come forth and meet with me personally to report the abuse whether it occurred in the past or present. You may also choose to report the abuse to our Diocesan Victim Assistance Advocate Mrs. Janan Senawi by calling the special confidential reporting line at (248) 354-3066.

We have established a Safety Environment Office located at the chancery to provide outreach and to insure that all parishes are conforming to the Charter by obtaining criminal background checks and providing PGC Training workshops for clergy, personnel, and volunteers who come into contact with children and elderly. Classes are also established for all the children enrolled in our parish programs teaching child safety material. The training program offered by our diocese for both children and adults is the Virtus Program. I have personally reviewed this program and found it to be in accordance with catholic morals and teachings. As such this letter is a promulgation letter to formally inform you that I have approved the Virtus program to be taught in our Safety Environment programs.

Guidelines are also established for a Code of Conduct for clergy and volunteers that are available at all parishes. We have developed a policy regarding sexual abuse of minors, which is available at the chancery office and all parishes. Also, to inform you that our diocese conforms to yearly audits recommended by the Conference of Catholic Bishops to insure that all Catholic Dioceses and institutions in the United States are in compliance with the Dallas Charter. I am pleased to inform you that our diocese has been in full compliance and has passed all audits since 2004. This year we had an onsite audit on October 23, and I am happy to report that we passed the audit and were found to be in full compliance.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to encourage all parents to take active roles in educating and safe guarding their children. As a church we plan to continue our mission by keeping our children safe while they are in our parishes and institutions.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Fykalabat*

Most Reverend Francis Y. Kalabat
Bishop of St. Thomas the Apostle
Chaldean Diocese -U.S.A.