



22 June 2017

To the people of the Diocese of Alexandria:

At the recently concluded spring meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the body of Bishops reflected on this, the fifteenth anniversary of the 2002 *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. As most of us remember with profound sadness, the crime and sin of child sexual abuse in many Catholic parishes and schools was brought out in the open in 2002 for all to see. Following the request of the Holy Father, the Bishops of the United States held a *Day of Prayer and Penance* during our spring gathering.

With the promulgation of *Charter*, the Bishops of the Church and all who assist us in pastoral ministry have committed ourselves to create and maintain a culture of safety for our children and young people. I want to thank you for your continued support of the Diocese of Alexandria's safe environment program and for continuing to provide a safe environment for our children and vulnerable adults. Ms. Pam Delrie coordinates these efforts for our diocese (pdelrie@diocesealex.org).

We, as Roman Catholic disciples of the Lord Jesus, are called to model relationships demonstrating respect in all we do. "Human virtues acquired by education, by deliberate acts and by perseverance ever-renewed in repeated efforts are purified and elevated by divine grace." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1810).

As Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria, I hereby approve of and promulgate the following safe environment programs for use in this diocese:

- VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children for Adults* program for our clergy, religious, employees and volunteers who work with children.
- VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children Touching Safety* program for use in our parish religious education programs and in our Catholic school religion classes.

The Diocese of Alexandria has a zero tolerance for abuse. Let us renew our commitment to protect minors entrusted to our care from all forms of abuse and neglect; and, if you are aware of an issue that troubles you regarding a child or young adult at any of our parish, mission or school functions, please contact your local law enforcement and/or the **Louisiana Child Abuse Hotline** at 1-855-452-5437 immediately. This is the first step if you have a concern for the safety of a child or young



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person. Additionally, please know that the Diocese of Alexandria has a Victims Assistance Coordinator that may be contacted (Dr. Lee Kneipp, 318-542-9805).

I want to thank you for supporting these efforts. In all we do, let us seek the Kingdom and all righteousness, loving one another and respecting the dignity of each human life, from the moment of conception through the last breath of natural life.

In this fifteenth year of the *Charter*, please know that I will stand with you, in protecting our children, our young people and the vulnerable adults that are part of the Catholic family of central Louisiana. I am fraternally yours,

In the light and love of the Lord,

+ David P. Talley

Most Reverend David P. Talley, M.S.W., J.C.D.
Bishop of Alexandria