



MOST REVEREND JOSEPH R. KOPACZ, D.D., PH.D.
CATHOLIC DIOCESE of JACKSON

July 1, 2016

Dear Friends,

The Diocese of Jackson along with the Catholic Church throughout the United States is committed to fostering safe environments for children who are entrusted to our care, whether in the parish, schools, or other ministry settings. All forms of abuse and neglect must be eradicated, in particular sexual abuse from sexual misconduct. All forms of abuse violate the human dignity of the person, and are contrary to what Jesus taught us. I am grateful to all church personnel in our diocese as they continue to study and put in place the best literature and practices so as to create safe environments for all who come to our parishes, schools and ministries. The recent implementation of the VIRTUS program represents our commitment to excellence, especially regarding the program's monthly bulletins based on the latest research and best practices.

Over the years the Diocese of Jackson has periodically revised and added to the policies that guide the implementation and monitoring of safe environments throughout our parishes, schools and institutions. The last such update was July 2014. Along with the implementation of the VIRTUS program, we draw your attention to some refinements as well as adding new documents in one convenient place such as the travel policy. This current document like the previous, finds its direction from the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms for Diocesan Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priest or Deacons, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002 and revised in 2011.

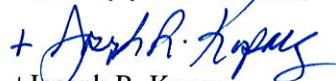
By this letter I hereby promulgate this revised Protection of Children for Diocese of Jackson for Lay Church Personnel; it will take effect July 1, 2016. It applies to all personnel and volunteers throughout the Diocese in all parishes, schools, offices, agencies, and other institutions which operate under the administrative authority of the Jackson Diocese. On July 1, 2016 this current document supersedes all previous existing policies of the Jackson Diocese which deal with the policies contained herein.

This document seeks to protect, enhance and restore the trust that our faith calls for between agents of the Church and the people entrusted to our care, especially children and youth. To victims and their families I extend my sincere apology and ask for your forgiveness on behalf of the Diocese of Jackson for the harm inflicted by any agent of our local church. If there are any cases of abuse that have not been brought to our attention, once again I urge any victims to please come forward.

All members of the Church are called upon to be vigilant in implementing this document to the fullest. I offer my sincere appreciation and thanks to all the faithful for their support and work in this area. Our children need safe environments to thrive as God's children and grow into the fullest potential for which he created all. We are committed to fostering safe environments for all.

May God bless you, protect and guide you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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+Joseph R. Kopacz
Bishop of Jackson