

## Diocese of Austin

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Office of the Bishop

February 14, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I write with sincere pastoral concern for our children who are students in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). On October 29, 2019, the AISD Board of Trustees gave final approval to new lessons in the district's Human Sexuality and Responsibility (HSR) curriculum. Sadly, the curriculum they have chosen seriously misinforms students regarding human sexuality, promotes grave immorality, and exposes children to unwarranted risk of harm. With the far-reaching impact of education in the area of human sexuality, it is critical that our children receive formation rooted in objective truth.

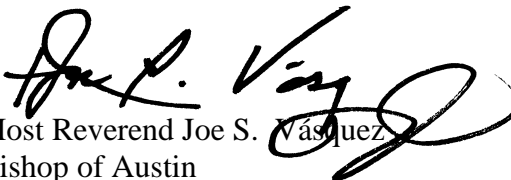
As your shepherd, I write you now to inform you of your rights as a parent to opt out of the curriculum. My hope is to help you as parents in catechizing your children regarding human sexuality in a way consistent with faith and reason.

AISD states that “a student may be exempted (opted-out) from participation in specific or all lessons of the HSR program upon written request.” Furthermore, they ensure that “students who opt out will be provided with alternative instruction and shall not be punished or embarrassed in any manner for non-participation.” In order to assist you with opting out your children from this curriculum, the Diocese has provided our parishes within the AISD resources to help you educate and form your children. These resources may be found at your parish on March 7 and 8, 2020, as well as on the diocesan website.

The Church's teaching on human sexuality is a gift – a treasure that illuminates the path to authentic happiness and freedom on earth as well as perfect joy in heaven. I want you as parents to have everything you need to present the Church's teachings to your children in a way that is life-giving and age appropriate.

While I am disappointed with the decision of the AISD, I am confident in the Lord, who promises “that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). It is my sincere hope and prayer that you will find these resources helpful to fulfill your calling as Christian parents and the first educators of your children. Know of my prayers for you.

Sincerely in Christ,

  
Most Reverend Joe S. Vasquez  
Bishop of Austin