



## Archdiocese of New Orleans

Office of the Archbishop

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Dear Clergy, Religious, and Laity of the Archdiocese of New Orleans,

During our general assembly in June, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops revised the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. I ask that each of us, in our service to the children and youth of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, continue our deep commitment to provide safe environments for all of the minors under our pastoral care. I encourage everyone also to pray for and help victims who have experienced the harm of abuse in the past and those who may come forth with allegations now or in the future.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness to the prevention of child abuse and for holding us accountable for the safety of our children in programs across the archdiocese. Child abuse is a sin of our society. Education will help us recognize the signs of abuse and neglect as we strive to prevent tragedy in the lives of children and youth.

We will continue our Safe Environment programs throughout the archdiocese in our parishes, schools, ministries and organizations. All children and youth will be trained annually using developmentally appropriate materials.

All clergy, paid staff and volunteers having contact with minors and those attending any over-night event with minors, will continue to receive Safe Environment training on mandated reporting laws, standards of behavior and appropriate boundaries prior to service. Adults will receive criminal background checks before service to minors. Safe Environment training and background checks must be repeated every three years.

As our young people arrive in our parishes and schools, let us always remember the Gospel of Mark, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me." (Mark 9:37) When members of our young Church are with us, it is our challenge and responsibility to recognize the person of Christ in them, to lead them to Christ, and to help them to recognize their goodness.

If you have any questions regarding Safe Environment in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, I invite you to contact Sr. Mary Ellen Wheelahan, O. Carm., [srmwheelahan@arch-no.org](mailto:srmwheelahan@arch-no.org) or (504)861-6278. Please take time to review the policies and many resources we have available to us on the Safe Environment page of the Archdiocesan website, <https://www.nolacatholic.org/safe-environment>.

I ask that we continue to pray together for the children and youth of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. It is important in our society today that we teach them to recognize Christ within themselves and others and to have the courage necessary to come forward if they need help.

No child should suffer abuse, especially not by a Church leader or staff member. Once again, please join me in prayer for those who have been abused that they will know God's healing and peace.

Wishing you God's blessings and with gratitude for your service to our young Church, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond  
Archbishop of New Orleans

GMA/smw