

Archdiocese of Santa Fe
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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 16, 2021
Year of Saint Joseph

Dear People of God,

Jesus told his disciples, "Let the little children come to me." He made it clear to all of his followers that we must always love and respect children; in fact, we must love and protect *all* people since we are made in the image and likeness of God. Unfortunately, these words have not always been heeded.

In the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we are all reminded of our duty to protect children and to take steps to avoid inappropriate behavior and abuse. Frequently we are reminded of past shortcomings, failures and inappropriate (even criminal) behavior of some. These actions have tragically alienated many people from the Church. But we must not be discouraged; with God's help and our determined efforts, we will make our world a safe and better place.

Since 1990, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has trained thousands of paid personnel, volunteers and clergy so as to develop and learn skills and tools to recognize all types of abuse. Currently, the Archdiocese is using two programs, one for adults called VIRTUS, and one specifically geared for children pre-K through Confirmation called Circle of Grace. Both of these programs I have promulgated and are excellent resources for training and increasing security of our youth.

As a continuing effort to provide information and to focus on our duties to keep children safe, the Archdiocese reviews and updates our policy as deemed necessary. All revisions are in compliance with the Dallas Charter.

It is my prayer that there will be a greater understanding and focus among our clergy and laity, a concentrated effort to heal and prevent further harm, and greater respect for the dignity of all—from youngest child to the most senior member of our society.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John C. Wester".

Most Rev. John C. Wester,
Archbishop of Santa Fe