

April, 2013

# Keeping + Protect

OUR PROMISE TO

APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



## Child Safety and the Year of Faith

The Year of Faith affords us an opportunity to recommit ourselves in our efforts to keep safe our precious children and young people. God Himself calls us to this important work.

**Jeremiah 1:5** *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you...”* God envisions and commissions us even before our birth to embrace His mission: that we become His ambassadors in this world. Our children, therefore, should be respected and recognized as the ones who will take this sacred assignment forward into the future.

**Jeremiah 29:11** *“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you...plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.”* The depth of hurt that our young people suffer through abuse is not easily overcome. The anguish and misery that follow them into their adult lives can thwart or delay their living out of God’s mission. The loss of innocence through physical, emotional, and sexual abuse cannot be regained.

**Luke 17, 1-2** *“...Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the person through whom they occur. It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.”* Those who would cause injury to a child through abuse are considered by God to be among the

the worst of sinners. Indeed, when a precious child’s faith is affected because of the words and actions of those who are supposed to inspire them on their journey of holiness, their sin is magnified.

**CCC 2389** *“...[When sexual abuse is perpetrated by adults on children or adolescents entrusted to their care,] the offense is compounded by the scandalous harm done to the physical and moral integrity of the young, who will remain scarred by it, all their lives; [it is a] violation of responsibility for their upbringing.”* The Catechism of the Catholic Church recognizes the extent of devastation done to those who suffer sexual abuse. The American bishops, through their Charter, *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*, address the healing and reconciliation of victims/survivors; how to effectively respond to allegations; ways to ensure the accountability of our procedures; and methods to protect children and young people among the faithful.

Such an undertaking requires all of us to be knowledgeable and aware of activities that cause heightened alarm, and vigilant in taking action to prevent such harm. You are encouraged to attend the diocese’s adult safe environment training, “A Child’s Safety is an Adult’s Job” when it is offered at your parish.

WHO THEN IS THIS THAT EVEN THE WIND AND THE SEA OBEY HIM?



YEAR OF FAITH 2012-2013

## TRUST & RESPECT

The reality of sexual exploitation is that often the child is very scared, uncomfortable, or embarrassed to talk about the experience to parents, guardians, or teachers. Children WILL talk, however, if an atmosphere of trust and support is established where children know they are loved and respected. This allows a child to talk without fear of accusation, blame, or guilt. Some signs [of the effects of abuse] to watch for are:

- Extreme mood swings, withdrawal, and fearfulness.
- Bed wetting or other sleep disturbances.
- Acting out or showing an unusual interest in sexual matters.
- A fear of certain places, people, or activities.

- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children



## A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

Come Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove,  
With light and comfort from above.  
Be Thou our Guardian,  
Thou our Guide,  
Stay close by every child's side.

Amen.

[From Prayers for Special Help]

## SUICIDE INTERVENTION

Child abuse, among other reasons, is sometimes the cause of teenage suicide. The U.S. currently ranks second in the world in the number of these tragic deaths. We need to educate ourselves about this area and be ready to intervene when we see warning signs in our young people.

### CRISIS HOTLINES:

#### National:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

#### Pikes Peak Region:

1-719-596-LIFE (5433)

#### Douglas County:

1-303-795-6187

For other areas, please check  
your local directory.

EVERY KNOWN OR REASONABLY SUSPECTED INSTANCE OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT MUST BE REPORTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO:  
YOUR NEAREST LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO MAKE A REPORT TO THE DIOCESE OF COLORADO SPRINGS, CALL:

**719-866-6505**

OR REPORT BY MAIL AT THE ADDRESS BELOW  
ATTN: OFFICE OF MISSION EFFECTIVENESS

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE DIOCESE OF COLORADO SPRINGS TO RESPOND PROMPTLY AND WITH COMPASSION  
TO ALL REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT. BE AWARE THAT IF YOU REPORT CHILD ABUSE,  
THE DIOCESE WILL REPORT THE MATTER TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.



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