



April, 2010
Year for the Priest

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

April is the Easter season, a time to celebrate our participation in the Paschal Mystery, a season of newness and hope, and a promise of spring. At Easter we celebrate our faith, looking toward our future and remembering that, despite our failures, weaknesses and imperfections, there is hope for renewal and a strong sense of looking forward to the future.

In looking toward the future, the Catholic Church has made a promise and is committed to the protection of God's children and the prevention of child sexual abuse. Since the inception of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in 2002:

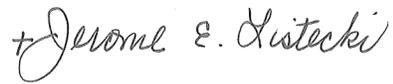
- The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has a fulltime Safe Environment Coordinator who works with parishes and schools to promote awareness of safe environment issues and prevention of child sexual abuse.
- The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has a fulltime Victim Assistance Coordinator who assists individuals in making a report of sexual abuse, obtaining resources, and providing outreach support to victim survivors and their families.
- The Archdiocese of Milwaukee participates in a yearly on-site audit of their safe environment practices and procedures. Every year the Archdiocese has been found to be in full compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
- Prior to any employment or service in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, all employees and those volunteers who work with children or youth must attend an adult Safe Environment Education session about the awareness of child sexual abuse. They have been educated to recognize the behavior of offenders and what actions to take if they observe or suspect any of these behaviors. To date, more than 40,000 adults in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee have attended these sessions.
- All schools and religious education programs must provide safe environment education to children in grades kindergarten through high school. To date, more than 100,000 children have received safe environment education in our schools and religious education programs.
- All employees and those volunteers who work with children must have both state and national background checks conducted prior to their service.
- All employees and those volunteers who work with children must acknowledge that they have read the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's Code of Ethical Standards. The Code of Ethical Standards serves to let individuals know not only what is expected of them as

members of the faith community but also lets them know what is expected of all leaders of the faithful.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect and encourage families and communities to support children and families. While we have worked hard and succeeded in our efforts to protect children, there is still much to do. Until child sexual abuse is no longer a part of society, the Church will not stop in Her efforts to protect and safeguard God's children. I ask all the faithful to renew our promise to protect our children, reminding ourselves that our children, our future, are filled with faith and hope. It is the responsibility of all the faithful to continue to grow in our awareness of child abuse making our communities safe environments for all of God's children to live and learn.

To all of the victims and survivors, the children, the vulnerable, and each and every one of us as a child of God, I renew my promise and the promise of the Church to continue to create safe and healthy environments for all. I also want to thank all of the faithful who work so diligently in order to maintain these environments.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "† Jerome E. Listecky". The signature is written in black ink and includes a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecky
Archbishop of Milwaukee

** Child abuse is defined as permitting or causing any harmful or offensive contact to a child's body. This includes any communication or action (emotional or physical) of any kind which humiliates, shames, or frightens a child. Child abuse does not discriminate. It occurs within every religious, ethnic, and socio-economic background.*