



The Month of April is:
SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH
And
CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As some of you may know, April has been declared Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the state of Wisconsin. Why is this important to us? Well, as most Roman Catholics know, sexual assault crimes can happen anywhere and to anyone, especially to our most vulnerable populations. Through the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, we have seen the safety and security we once took for granted in our sacred sanctuaries diminish. Victims, their loved ones, clergy colleagues of accused priests and bishops, and every member of the congregation has lost a valued sense of trust as the dark confusion of this crime was revealed. At times, many of us have felt hopeless and overwhelmed...where will all of this lead? Where is God in all of this?

And yet, this same month of April, this same month of Sexual Assault Awareness, offers each of us a way through the darkness of human sin and into the light of God's loving mercy and grace. Holy Week reminds us each year about the power of sin, the nature of great suffering, the nature of great sacrifice given in love, and the power of freedom in redemption. As we follow Christ this Holy Week, let us have the courage to stand with Him in His moments of abuse and torture, in His suffering and physical diminishment, in His wish to "let this cup" pass him by. Many of us may wish that the "cup" of the sexual abuse scandal in our Church would pass all of us by, and yet Jesus reminds us that we must walk through all of the stations of this cross to receive the freedom of His rising from brokenness. This April, may we all have the courage to follow Christ to the Light that comes into the darkness, thus inspiring us to continue to have the courage to follow those harmed by our Church to the Light of healing and redemption.

Easter Blessing to you,

Kathy Coffey-Guenther

Co-Chair, Community Advisory Board on Clergy Abuse, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Member, Gesu Parish

Dear Friends,

Sexual abuse and exploitation of believers by spiritual leaders has had a profound impact on the Catholic Community. It has taken tremendous courage for those abused as children to come forward as adults and tell their stories. This action by survivors has had an important and positive effect on protecting children from sexual abuse within the Catholic Church and in a much larger societal context.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. We take this opportunity to thank all of those who have shared their stories of abuse, helping to create an environment that is safe and supportive.

Sexual abuse of a child is a crime. If you or someone you know was abused as a minor by church personnel and is now an adult, the Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to obtain support and make a formal complaint of abuse to the diocese. The Victim Assistance Coordinator can be reached at 414-769-3436 or peter-sona@archmil.org. To make a formal report outside of the Archdiocese, you may contact the Healing Center at 1-414-671-4325. You may also report as an adult directly to the civil authorities. If the abused person is currently under 18 years of age (minor) please report directly to the civil authorities. (Refer to listing on right.)

Sincerely,

Amy Peterson

Victim Assistance Coordinator



For more information on Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Services at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee,

Dodge County

Department of Human Services
920-386-3750 or after hours 920-887-6713

Fond du Lac County

Department of Social Services
920-929-3400 or after hours 920-929-3391

Kenosha County

Department of Human Services
262-605-6582 or after hours 262-657-7188

Milwaukee County

Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare
414-220-SAFE (7233) or after hours 414-220-SAFE (7233)

Ozaukee County

Department of Social Services 262-238-8200 or
after hours 262-238-8436

Racine County

Human Services Department
262-538-6321 or after hours 262-638-6321

Sheboygan County

Health and Human Services Department
920-459-6418 or after hours 920-459-3111

Walworth County

Department of Health and Human Services
262-741-3200 or 800-365-1587 or after hours
262-741-3200 or 800-741-3200

Washington County

Department of Social Services
262-335-4610 or after hours Resource Center
262-306-2222

Waukesha County

Department of Health and Human Services
262-548-7212 or after hours 262-548-7666