



Diocese of Reno

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To: All participants in the *Protecting God's Children* Program
From: Bishop Randolph R. Calvo
Re: Importance of Training

I wish to express my thanks to you for committing yourself to participating in the Virtus program *Protecting God's Children*. This is an excellent program and one that will assist all of us in being more aware of the problem of child abuse and what we can do to make our facilities and programs safe for children and young people.

This program, or one very much like it, is being required in all Catholic Dioceses across the country. In June, 2002, when the Catholic bishops met in Dallas, they committed themselves to addressing the problem of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and church personnel in as many ways as possible. Among the many safeguards that were put in place was a requirement that all Dioceses provide this type of program. In northern Nevada, we have chosen this specific approach since we are a small diocese and do not have the staff to develop one locally. Additionally, this program was developed by professionals in consultation with people knowledgeable about sexual abuse of minors and those who habitually lack the use of reason.

I have directed that all paid personnel of the Diocese and all volunteers who have any contact with minors in the performance of their duties complete this program. Because of the great value to be found in this program, all parents will benefit from it and should take it as well. A *Protecting God's Children* Awareness Session can now be taken online or a live training program directed by a facilitator specifically trained to present this material is still available. Once the training program is completed, each trainee is required to complete a follow-up process of reading one brief bulletin each month for a total of twenty-four and a recertification review. School faculty and staff are required to read the bulletins for the duration of their employment. Every educator knows that saying something once is not sufficient for learning to take place. The purpose of the bulletins is to provide reinforcement of the original material provided in the initial training and additional insights into the problem of child sexual abuse and ways to prevent it. Background checks are also required.

All those trained have the option of receiving the bulletins on-line if they have a computer, or receiving them by mail. These bulletins are not difficult to read and require no more than ten or fifteen minutes to complete. They are intended for a broad audience of those who have taken the training nationwide and they are written in an easily understood style for people from a large range of educational backgrounds. Each bulletin ends with a question to insure that the reader understands the main point of the material.

Thank you again for committing yourself to the completion of this program. You are one of thousands of church workers and volunteers around the country who will be trained to be aware and observant in the protection of minors and young people and those who habitually lack the use of reason. I understand that it is sometimes hard to make such a long term commitment; however, each one of us needs to be knowledgeable and alert in this matter. The safety of our children and teens requires our vigilance.

I pray that the actions taken by the Bishops in Dallas, coupled with the commitment of our employees and volunteers, will create an environment where adults will be alert and children will be safe. The evil of sexual abuse of minors and those who habitually lack the use of reason must be met directly and forcefully in order to be prevented. Your participation is greatly appreciated and valued. May God bless you and the ministry you perform in His name.