

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COVENANT OF THE BISHOP AND PRESBYTERATE OF DALLAS

We have a moral and legal responsibility and are entrusted by God with the spiritual, emotional and physical well being of all people. As they participate in activities within or sponsored by our Diocese, it is our deep commitment and sacred obligation to provide an environment that is safe and nurturing. Guided by the mission and example of Jesus Christ, we will do all in our power to protect children, youth, vulnerable adults and the elderly. In that light, we commit ourselves to the following covenant:

- I. We pledge to avoid the mistakes of the past. There is no place in our church, in the priesthood, in religious life or in our parishes for those who would harm children, youth, vulnerable adults and the elderly.
- II. We pledge ourselves to promoting healing and reconciliation for those who have been injured by abuse of any kind within the Church. We will work with our clergy, religious and laity to restore trust and harmony in our faith communities.
- III. We pledge ourselves to the ongoing development of policies and procedures, to respond openly and promptly to any allegations of abuse and to cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases. We intend to be open, honest and forthright in our public statements to the media, and in our communications with all Catholics of our diocese.
- IV. We pledge ourselves to adhering to clear and well-publicized standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy, paid personnel and volunteers of the church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children, youth, vulnerable adults and the elderly.
- V. We pledge ourselves as Church, including the clergy, religious and laity, to maintaining “safe environment” programs, which are in accord with Catholic moral principles. They will be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others. In addition, we pledge to commit ourselves to ensuring accountability for our procedures.

Conclusion

As the people of God, united with one another in the living Gospel, the Bishop and Presbyterate of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas embrace this covenant as a means of shared responsibility, expectations, and understanding of appropriate professional and personal relationships in the ministry context. It is part of our mission to truly protect and nurture young people and vulnerable adults. It is hoped that this covenant will further that mission.

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