



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 2013

Dear Catechetical Leader:

This past year marked the 10th anniversary of the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People** in the United States of America. The Charter is a commitment on behalf of the Catholic Church to ensure that all measures will be taken to respond appropriately to allegations of child sexual abuse and to prevent the sexual abuse of children by any member of diocesan personnel. One of the key components in accomplishing this task is through education and training. As stipulated in Article 12 of the Charter, dioceses must *“cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.”*


Here in our diocese, the catechetical community has played an integral role in the educational component of our Safe Environment Program. Since 2004, catechetical leaders have been instrumental in providing sexual abuse awareness training to children in all grade levels of our faith formation programs in addition to what they already receive in their schools. I am grateful for your work and I assure you the training has had overwhelmingly positive results.

In an ongoing effort to strengthen our efforts, we are introducing a new educational program called *Circles of Care* for our parish catechetical programs. This curriculum originally developed by the Diocese of Manchester has been adapted by the Diocese of Syracuse to address age appropriate personal safety issues for children and youth in the context of Catholic moral teaching. The training will now replace the awareness training that the diocese had been using since 2004.

I am confident you will review the materials and fully implement the training in your catechetical programs. Cathy Cornue, Diocesan Director of Faith Formation and Jackie Farrell, Safe Environment Coordinator are available to you for any questions you may have in regards to this new program.

Once again, I wish to express my gratitude for all that you do to ensure the safety of our children. We must remain vigilant in our commitment and in all of our efforts to protect our children.

Sincerely,


Most Reverend Robert J. Cunningham
Bishop of Syracuse