



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

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TO BE READ AT ALL MASSES AUGUST 25-26
BY ORDER OF THE MOST REVEREND BISHOP

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I join with all of you in the mixed emotions of sadness and anger on hearing the news of the Grand Jury report from Pennsylvania on the number of child abuse cases made public recently. Although it spans a period since 1947, even one case of harming a child by abuse is a crime and a sin. Also sad is the poor response and ignorance of the harm done to victims by those in authority. To those victims who suffered so terribly, I offer my apologies for what they suffered in our Church. I also offer my prayers that God speedily heal them and make them whole.

I ask that all Catholics in the Diocese of Lafayette join me in prayer and voluntary acts of penance for the victims and their healing. I also ask that you pray for, thank and encourage the many faithful and dedicated priests of our Diocese. They suffer also because of the bad actions of a few. Just as we should not judge all policemen because of a few bad ones, so should we not judge all good and faithful priests.

Since 2002, our Diocese has enforced the Safe Environment Program for the Protection of Children and Young People. Everyone who ministers to minors in our Diocese must undergo safe environment training and be updated every year. Every priest, religious, teacher, volunteer, even me, must undergo background checks and safe environment training. I am happy to say that our Diocese received a 100% grade from the auditing firm that ensures compliance. If an allegation is made, it is investigated and if it seems credible, that person is removed from ministry and the legal authorities are notified.

This Centennial Year of the founding of our Diocese gives us the opportunity to renew our Catholic Faith and to rededicate our commitment for the safety of all children in our Diocese. As your Bishop, I firmly promise to be vigilant and to guard those placed in my care. If anyone has been harmed by child abuse or suspects abuse is occurring by any church personnel, please notify the Diocesan Office. Again, I ask your prayers for all victims and for me and all our faithful priests.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette

JDD:mhb