

APRIL: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Bulletin Announcement:

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It serves as an annual reminder of the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Catholic Church remains dedicated to being at the forefront of raising awareness about the scourge of child abuse, implementing the best policies and procedures to protect children from potential abusers, and working with professionals to bring healing to those who have been abused. During the month of April, you are encouraged to visit the diocesan safe environment webpage (<https://doy.org/safe-environment/>), where you will find reporting resources and access to our free online safe environment VIRTUS training. This online training provides information about the signs and symptoms of abuse and what steps you can take to prevent and/or report it.

Please take time this month to pray *A Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse*, which is provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just: You gave your only Son to save us by his blood on the cross. Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them. Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters who have been gravely harmed, and the cries of those who love them. Soothe their restless hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits with faith. Grant them justice for their cause, enlightened by your truth. Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people's wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness. Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice. Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors. Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Universal Prayer:

One or more of the following petitions should be included with your Universal Prayers on Sundays.

For victims of child abuse and neglect, may God help to free them so that they may live safely in the peace of Christ....we pray to the Lord.

For children suffering physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, may they be delivered into the compassion of the Lord....we pray to the Lord.

For all victims, may they feel neither guilt nor shame, but have the courage to seek help in order to free themselves from all that ails them....we pray to the Lord.

For perpetrators of child abuse or neglect that they may stop and seek professional help....we pray to the Lord.

For those who witness abuse or neglect, that they may understand that abusive behavior is never an expression of love, is never acceptable, and must never be tolerated....we pray to the Lord.

For our community of faith, that we may become compassionate and sensitive towards victims as Jesus would be....we pray to the Lord.

For an end to all child abuse and neglect, that all of us may be an instrument of peace, a beacon of light, and source of healing....we pray to the Lord.