



MESSAGE FROM BISHOP RICKEN

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In 2002, the crime and grave sin of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church was brought out into the open. In response to this crisis, an important meeting with the Bishops of the United States established the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*. This Charter pledged the Catholic Church's commitment to create a safe environment within the Church for children and youth; and a commitment to reach out to victims/survivors of sexual abuse and their families. As Church, we acknowledge our responsibility and role in the suffering, and we continue to ask for forgiveness.

Thirteen years later, we continue to remain vigilant in our commitment to comply with all laws regarding the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse against children to the proper authorities for investigation. I resolve to continuously review and refine necessary policies and procedures. I hope, and continually pray, for the healing of all those who have been harmed.

Together we are called to minister to all of God's people and show special care for our children. We will continue to aid in the healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors of sexual abuse, respond effectively to allegations of sexual abuse, be accountable for our procedures, and protect the faithful, especially the children.

I ask for your continual help, support and prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL
Bishop of Green Bay

We protect the faithful.

The Diocese of Green Bay joins the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, as they and we pledge:

“We pledge most solemnly to one another and to you, God’s people, that we will work to our utmost for the protection of children and youth.”

“We pledge that we will devote to this goal the resources and personnel necessary to accomplish it.”

“We pledge that we will do our best to ordain to the priesthood and put into positions of trust only those who share this commitment to protecting children and youth.”

We promise to continue improving our efforts to Preserve the *Promise to Protect* and the *Pledge to Heal*.

We humbly invite anyone who may have experienced abuse to please come forward. If anyone is currently being abused, please immediately call civil authorities.

You matter to us – there is Hope!

Compassionately committed to serve you:

Office of Safe Environment
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1-877-270-8174
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Diocese of
Green Bay

PRESERVING THE PROMISE TO PROTECT AND THE PLEDGE TO HEAL

2017 Update





We aid in the healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors of sexual abuse of minors.

While the majority of abuse occurred in the past, we understand the hurt and impact of the abuse is still present today.

- The Diocese of Green Bay has a designated individual, titled Diocesan Assistance Coordinator, who ministers to the pastoral, spiritual and emotional well-being of victims/survivors.
- Bishop Ricken and previous diocesan bishops recognize the impact of the abuse. They have personally met with victims/survivors to compassionately listen to their experiences and concerns.
- Prayer Services for Healing have been held throughout the diocese, led by Bishop Ricken and survivors of sexual abuse.

We actively respond to all allegations.

The Diocese of Green Bay takes every complaint of sexual abuse or misconduct by a priest, deacon, employee, and volunteer very seriously.

- All allegations of sexual abuse of a person now under the age of 18 are immediately reported to civil authorities for investigation.
- People making allegations of a minor which occurred decades ago are encouraged to also report the crime to civil authorities.
- All priests, deacons, employees and volunteers who have a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor are reported to civil authorities and are permanently removed from ministry.



We are creating Safe Environments for all children.

Since 2003, when the USCCB *Charter* was first implemented, we have taken the following protective steps:

- 39,656 background checks have been completed on clergy, employees, and volunteers (this also includes criminal background checks, sex offender registries and an alias name search).
- 39,310 clergy, employees, and volunteers have received training on keeping children safe through the “VIRTUS — Protecting God’s Children” program.
- 27,254 children (on average) in our Catholic schools and religious education programs, have received annually age-appropriate, morally sound training on how to be safe, including recognizing signs of abuse and how to report.

Data reported for August 2017



We are accountable to our procedures.

Beginning in 2003, the Diocese of Green Bay has participated in annual Audits conducted by an out-of-state independent auditing firm. These Audits are instrumental in protecting children, being transparent, and reestablishing the trust of the faithful. All parishes and schools in the Diocese participate by providing data for these audits.

The Diocese of Green Bay has an Independent Review Board that functions as a consultative body to the Bishop and is comprised of members not employed by the Diocese.

The Board reviews and makes recommendations regarding:

- Changes to existing policies or the adoption of new sexual abuse or misconduct policies.
- Aspects of all cases of reported allegations of clergy sexual abuse or misconduct of minors.
- Suitability for ministry of clergy who have allegedly sexually abused or exploited minors.

“I hope, and continually pray, for the healing of all those who have been harmed.” - Bishop David L. Ricken