DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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Safe Environment

To: Priests and Deacons

Fr: Katita Schloemann – Safe Environment Coordinator

Re: Child Abuse Prevention Month

April has been designated Child Abuse Prevention Month in the United States since 1983. It is an annual observance dedicated to raising awareness and preventing child abuse. Abuse occurs at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions, and at all levels of education. Catholic dioceses across the United States work year-round to help prevent abuse.

The Diocese of Sacramento is ever vigilant in our commitment to help prevent abuse.

Attached, please find:

- Petitions for April (English and Spanish)
- USCCB Nine Day Novena for Protection and Healing of Abuse
- Ten Tips for Protecting Children

For more information on Safe Environment practices in the Diocese of Sacramento, please visit:

https://www.scd.org/safe-environment

Petitions for April

Easter Sunday April 11 – 12

That the Easter promise of new life will fill the hearts and minds of those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. We pray to the Lord.

Que la promesa de Pascua de una nueva vida llene los corazones y mentes de aquellos que sufren en cuerpo, mente o espíritu. Roguemos al Señor.

Third Sunday of April 18-19

For survivors of abuse, and for their families and friends who support them, that God's providence will lead them to peace and wholeness. We pray to the Lord.

Por los sobrevivientes del abuso y sus familias y amistades que los apoyan, que la providencia de Dios los lleve a la paz y la integridad. Roguemos al Señor.

We pray that our bishops, church leaders, and the faithful will promote justice and healing for victims and survivors of abuse; as we commit to protect the most vulnerable among us, our children, young people and vulnerable adults. We pray to the Lord

Oremos para que nuestros obispos, líderes de la iglesia y los fieles promuevan la justicia y sanación de las víctimas y sobrevivientes del abuso; en cual nos comprometemos a proteger a los más vulnerables entre nosotros, nuestros niños, jóvenes y los adultos vulnerables. Roguemos al Señor.

Fourth Sunday of April 25-26

That victims of abuse, in the embrace of the Church, find the joy and peace of the risen Christ. We pray to the Lord.

Que las víctimas del abuso, en la ternura de la iglesia encuentren la alegría y la paz del Cristo resucitado. Roguemos al Señor.

For all who have suffered sexual abuse; may they find in Jesus the healing comfort they seek. We pray to the Lord.

Por todos los que han sufrido abuso sexual; que puedan encontrar en Jesús la sanación y la paz que buscan. Roguemos al Señor.

USCCB Nine Day Novena for Protection and Healing of Abuse
April 18th – 26th

Every April, Catholic parishes and schools across the United States participate in National Child Abuse Prevention Month. While dioceses work year-round to prevent abuse, during this month a special emphasis is placed on the importance of learning how to protect the vulnerable from this evil.

Together, for the next nine days, let's pray that the vulnerable are protected from abuse, and that survivors of abuse may be accompanied on their paths to healing.

Novena
for Protection and Healing from Abuse

Intercessions

Day 1: May the most vulnerable be protected from all types of abuse and exploitation.

Day 2: May those who have been sexually abused receive comfort and healing.

Day 3: May those who work with children and young people be vigilant in protecting them from harm.

Day 4: May those who provide help for the abused act with wisdom and compassion in their healing ministries.

Day 5: May all families strive to provide safe and nurturing environments for children and young people.

Day 6: May all those who have committed abuse acknowledge the harm they have done, repent, and accept justice that ultimately comes from God.

Day 7: May those who have been abused receive the courage to tell their story, and may they be believed and supported.

Day 8: May Church leaders, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, promote justice and healing for survivors of abuse.

Day 9: May our Holy Father, Pope Francis, fulfill his role as good shepherd and protect the most vulnerable in his flock.

Prayers

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be, Prayer for Healing

Prayer for Healing

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.

Ten Tips for Protecting Children and Offering Outreach to Victims/Survivors

1 Sexual abuse is about the victim.

Many people are affected by abuse but the individual most impacted is the victim who has suffered a violation of trust that can affect his or her entire life.

2 The residual effects of having been abused can last a lifetime.

The sense of violation goes deep into a person's psyche and feelings of anger, shame, hurt and betrayal can build long after the abuse has taken place. Those who have been abused can heal, but if often takes time, therapy, and the support of loved ones.

3 No one has the right to have access to children.

No one, no matter who they are, has an automatic right to be around children or young people who are in the care of the Church without proper screening and without following the rules.

4 Common sense is not all that common.

Dioceses, schools, parishes, and especially families, must educate themselves and others on how to protect children.

5 Child sexual abuse can be prevented.

It is critical to build safety barriers around children and young people to keep them from harm—such as protective guardians, codes of conduct, background evaluations, policies and procedures, and safety training programs.

6 Feeling heard leads toward healing.

Relief from hurt and anger often comes when one feels heard, when one's pain and concerns are taken seriously, and a victim/survivor's suffering, pain, and anger are acknowledged.

7 You cannot always predict who will be an abuser.

Experience shows that most abuse is committed by someone who has gained the trust of a victim/survivor and his/her family.

8 There are behavioral warning signs of child abusers.

Some abusers isolate a potential victim by giving him or her undue attention or lavish gifts, others allow young people to participate in activities which their parents or guardians would not approve, such as watching pornography, drinking alcohol, using drugs, and excessive touching, such as wrestling and tickling.

9 People can be taught to identify grooming behavior.

Grooming behaviors are the actions which abusers take to project the image that they are kind, generous, caring people, while their intent is to lure a minor into an inappropriate relationship. Offenders can be patient and may groom their victim, his or her family, or community for years.

10 Background checks are important.

Background checks in churches, schools and other organizations keep predators away from children both because they scare off some predators and because they uncover past actions which should ban an adult from working or volunteering with children.

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