



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR

January 4, 2017

Dear Clergy, Parish and Catholic School Employees, Chancery Staff, and Volunteers,

As we begin the new year, I am writing to both thank you for all that you do in service of the Church and to ask for your continued support of our safe environment initiatives. In a recent letter appropriately issued on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Pope Francis challenged us to find “new courage” that “generates processes capable of acknowledging the reality that many of our children are experiencing today, and working to ensure them the bare minimum needed so that their dignity as God’s children will not only be respected but, above all, defended.”

To protect and defend that dignity, our Archdiocese is committed to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and its mandate that each diocese have clear standards of conduct, safe environment training programs, and background evaluations for all persons in positions of trust with regard to our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. The Archdiocese has accordingly enacted policies to address sexual abuse and to promote safe environments not only for our children and youth but also for our vulnerable adults.

Throughout this Archdiocese, all clergy, parish and Catholic school employees and chancery staff, as well as volunteers who have either regular or unsupervised interaction with minors or vulnerable adults, must complete the “Essential 3” requirements. The Essential 3 consists of signing a *Code of Conduct*, completing safe environment training through the VIRTUS: *Protecting God’s Children* program, and undergoing a background check. (All information you provide for a background check will be kept confidential by your parish or Catholic school, as well as by the Archdiocese).

Our responsibility to create and maintain safe environments is not a one-time obligation; it is an ongoing commitment. When it comes to promoting the safety of children, youth and vulnerable adults, we must strive for continued improvement. To that end, the Archdiocese requires that the Essential 3 requirements be renewed every three years. This enhanced Essential 3 re-credentialing process consists of signing a revised *Code of Conduct*, completing safe environment retraining, and satisfying a background recheck.

Whenever the time comes for you to complete the Enhanced Essential 3 requirements, you will be contacted by the Archdiocese, your supervisor or your Safe Environment Site Coordinator and provided with instructions for completing this re-credentialing. I appreciate your cooperation in this process. Together, we can work to protect God’s children and the most vulnerable among us. Thank you for your shared commitment to the achievement of this goal.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis