

## **Safe Environment** *Selected Biblical Reflections*

The church is a safe place. When we are with Jesus, that is the safest place to be. He would never want any harm to come to anyone, since He loves us all unconditionally. This unconditional love and safety must be especially apparent throughout our diocese and parishes.

*“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” Eph. 5:3*

Jesus Christ makes a series of promises to us regarding hope, forgiveness, and redemption. Our church policies and procedures must represent those promises as well. We do not want a child’s trust to be broken and we therefore must maintain the highest levels of integrity in everything we say and do.

*“Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers, to feed the Church of God which he bought with his own blood.”*  
*Acts 20:28*

Jesus teaches us to treasure the most vulnerable and poorest members of our society. He ministers to the poor; our Gospel is particularly focused on the victimized and marginalized. Why, then, would anyone ignore the abuse of a child? We are unashamedly advocates for all victims – this is the message and example we receive from Jesus.

*“I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”*

*Mt. 25:40*

We are interested in the growth of all people, based on an utter commitment to truth. We strive to develop a system and reputation of a commitment to speaking the truth. We honor the victims for their part in revealing the truth and we hold perpetrators responsible and accountable for the truth of their actions. The grace of Jesus Christ is deep enough and wide enough to encompass all involved in the devastation of sexual abuse. There is grace for all, the full grace of Jesus, for *living* in the truth – but never for hiding the truth.

*“Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. Where a man sows, there he reaps: if he sows in the field of self-indulgence he will get a harvest of corruption out of it; if he sows in the field of the Spirit he will get from it a harvest of eternal life.” Gal. 6:7-8*