



**THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ONE PETER YORKE WAY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109-6602 TEL: (415) 614-5500

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My Dear People,

In June of 2002, I joined with my brother bishops from throughout the United States in signing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, "*Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*". We reaffirmed our commitment in June of 2005. In this charter, we have pledged to do everything possible to ensure that the children and youth in our parish and school communities will be safe from sexual predators. I again reaffirm my personal commitment to that pledge.

Our Archdiocese has developed policies and practices that apply to the important work with children and youth done by clergy, staff, and volunteers because these people are the face of the Church. These policies and practices are designed to ensure the safety of the young people in our care, and apply to all adults whose duties include ongoing contact with minors. These adults, whether staff or volunteers, are required to go through background evaluation (done by fingerprinting or by background checks) and must complete a comprehensive online training program "*Recognize, Report and Prevent Child Abuse*", found on the Law Room website at [www.shieldthevulnerable.org](http://www.shieldthevulnerable.org).

Beginning in the school year 2008-2009, I have promulgated new programs for children and teens in our Catholic Schools and in our parish Religious Education programs.

- *Talking About Touching* Preschool through Third Grade
- *Kids Safety* (online) Fourth through Eighth Grade
- *Teen Safety* (online) Ninth through Twelfth Grade

We affirm parents as the first educators of their children. All of the above programs have opportunities for parent involvement. In addition, other methods of training parents to work with their children are being considered for school year 2008/2009. We encourage parents to attend the workshops for "*Talking about Touching*" as soon as they are scheduled, and to take the online training with their children or at a separate time.

May God bless all of you in your role as parents, educators, and concerned adults working with our children and youth.

Most Reverend George Niederauer  
Archbishop of San Francisco