



Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland
Bishop Emeritus
Diocese Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

Office of the Bishop
March 3, 2002

My Dear Friends in Christ,

I ask you to read the complete text of a statement from Bishop Wilton Gregory, President of our United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. A link to this statement appears below. I do so because recent news coverage of accusations of child sexual abuse by priests in the past might again prompt questions and conversations.

No community is perfect, and neither is our diocese. Still, beginning with the forceful confrontation of this problem by my predecessor, Bishop John J. Sullivan, our diocese has responded aggressively whenever allegations of such reprehensible conduct by any priest, teacher or employee came to our attention. Nearly 15 years ago, under his leadership, we became one of the first dioceses in the nation to develop policies and procedures to address allegations. That policy is regularly reviewed and updated and is available to anyone interested.

Under our policy, we have an independent review board of two women and four men. The board reviews the handling of every accusation and then advises me. No person on this Board is an employee or religious of the diocese. Its present chair is an outstanding ordained Baptist minister; its immediate past chair and present member is a prominent journalist. I have always followed the advice of this Board. Through their assistance, I can tell you that we presently have no priest, teacher or youth minister in a parish or school who has ever been accused of any form of child sexual abuse.

It is my earnest goal to prevent, so far as possible, any such predatory behavior. To this end, four years ago, we developed a code of ethical standards for all our priests, deacons, pastoral ministers and diocesan officials. We have a Victim's Advocate to assist anyone who believes they have been victimized. We conducted workshops for priests, teachers and youth ministers on our sexual abuse policies and procedures. Beginning next fall, we plan to sponsor a program of community awareness training on spotting the danger signals of sexual abuse. In fact, I am a spokesperson in the videos which will be used throughout the country, and my staff gave input into the materials.

I ask you to pray with me for the protection of all children from abuse by anyone. I ask you to pray with me for the healing of victims of past abuse. And I ask you to pray with me for the healing of perpetrators of abuse, that they will find forgiveness for their past actions and never again victimize one of God's children.

Finally, I ask you to pray with me for the vast majority of our priests, religious and lay employees who serve us so well and chastely, and who must bear the burden for those few who have done wrong.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland, DD
Bishop of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph