



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE
OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

MEMO

To: Pastors, Administrators, Parish Life Coordinators, Principals and Agency Directors
From: Lynn Muscarello
Date: March 23, 2009

I have included 2 resources for you that have been supplied by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. The first item is a brochure titled "So There is No Doubt" and the second is an April 2009: Child Abuse Prevention Month Packet. Although I have described both below, they can both be found on the USCCB's website (www.usccb.org/ocyp). I encourage you to use the resources that are most appropriate at your location. If you use any of the resources, please let me know so that it can be included in the Child Protection Audit. In light of Child Abuse Prevention Month I have also included a suggested bulletin or newsletter announcement, which also follows below.

- **So There Is NO Doubt**-The Catholic Church has made great strides in correcting the environment that provided an opportunity for the sexual abuse scandal. The movie Doubt, like the play, does an excellent job of portraying the complexities surrounding the issues.

Whether or not you think Father Flynn is guilty, there is no doubt that sexual abuse of minors did happen and there is no doubt of the commitment of the bishops that it will never happen again.

The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection has created a flyer "**So There Is NO Doubt**" to give dioceses/eparchies the information they would need should the movie Doubt create an open dialogue of the clergy sexual abuse scandal and what the Church has done to address it.

- **April 2009: Child Abuse Prevention Month**-Child abuse remains a national problem. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services there were 905,000 reported child abuse victims in 2006 alone. Imagine if a disease claimed that many young lives. What would be our national response? Abuse, even if it is not fatal, robs a life and damages a child's spirit. It changes who that person is on a fundamental level.

A hallmark of the Catholic Church is the protection of life and the dignity of the human person. Through scripture and Catholic teachings we are called to protect the life and dignity of all human persons no matter how young or old. Working to prevent child abuse is an important response of what we are called to do as Church.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection has compiled for your consideration a number of resources to use this coming April. These resources were designed for use at the diocesan and parish level during the month of April and can easily be duplicated and distributed to your parishes.

- **Letter**
- **Brochure**
- **Bulletin Announcements**
- **Liturgy Guide** (*English*) | (*Spanish*)
- **Articles** (Available in English and Spanish)
- **Posters** (*English*) | (*Spanish*)
- **Prayer Cards** (*English*) | (*Spanish*)
- **Child Abuse Prevention Blessing**
- **Order for the Blessing of a Victim of Crime or Oppression**

- [A Message from the Executive Director](#) 
- [Order Form](#)

According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) there are 25,857 Catholic parishes and schools in the United States. If every Catholic parish or school could stop just one child from being abused we could make a tremendous difference. By educating people and working together we can make a difference in the lives of children!

- **SUGGESTED BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT-** It has been requested that you place the following announcement in your bulletin or school newsletter periodically. Since April is Child Abuse Awareness Month, this would be an ideal time for such an inclusion. A suggested announcement follows:

SEXUAL ABUSE HOTLINE:

Anyone wishing to report an allegation of sexual misconduct by a priest or other diocesan personnel please call the hotline: 800-640-3044.

Many blessings to each of you as we continue to carry out this important ministry!!