



My Dear People in Christ:

Upholding and defending the dignity of the human person is one of the hallmark responsibilities of a Catholic Christian, and one of the most important areas under this umbrella is the protection of children and youth. As Pope Francis poignantly observed, “Many painful actions have caused a profound examination of conscience for the entire Church, leading us to request forgiveness from the victims and from our society for the harm that has been caused.”¹

I am grateful for my predecessors who have taken the responsibility of protecting children and youth seriously and put in place policies and processes to assist everyone—bishops, priests and lay people alike—to be proactive and vigilant in their care for young people. In the Diocese of Dodge City policies have been in place since the mid-1990s, training programs for adults have been in place for over fifteen years and training modules for youth have been available for over ten years. I do not say this to pat ourselves on the back, but rather to remind us that the protection of children and youth requires constant observance and accountability.

To this end, as revisions have been made to our Policy, I take the opportunity to re-promulgate our Diocesan *Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People* and *Code of Pastoral Conduct* and our Safe Environment Program. The evaluation of adults will continue to be a criminal background check, and the current training programs for adults and young people that have been approved in the past will continue to be utilized.

Our attitude should be that of Pope Francis: “The Church is called to be a place of piety and compassion, especially for those who have suffered. For all of us, the Catholic Church continues to be a field hospital that accompanies us on our spiritual journey. It is the place where we can sit with others, listen to them and share with them our struggles and our faith in the Good News of Jesus Christ.”² May our efforts to protect children and youth unite us as caring brothers and sisters in the Lord who are as watchful as guardian angels over their little ones.

Given in Dodge City, Kansas, this 1st day of January 2018.

Most Reverend John B. Brungardt
Bishop of Dodge City

Janice Grochowsky, CSJ
Chancellor

See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father. Matthew 18:10-11

¹ Pope Francis, *Chirograph* for the Institution of a Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, March 22, 2014.

² Pope Francis, Address to the members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, September 21, 2017.