

LED BY THE SPIRIT

By the MOST REV. JOHN B. BRUNGARDT

St. Paul teaches: **“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a Spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’ ”** (Romans 8:14-15). Through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we participate with Jesus in His divine Sonship. We have become the Father’s adopted sons and daughters through Christ; Jesus has taught us to call God **“Abba, Father,”** to convey our intimacy with Him.

Most of us have known that same kind of intimacy with our birth or adoptive parents. Those of you who are parents through your vocation to marriage and family life find your fulfillment in sharing that love with your children.

Many of you reading this may have firsthand experience with the adoption process. Perhaps a brother or sister was adopted, or maybe you yourselves have adopted a child, or provided foster care to a child in need. Perhaps you were blessed to work with a Catholic or other faith-based agency in the process.

Unfortunately, right now in our state, there are activists seeking to prohibit faith-based adoption and foster-care agencies from providing their services simply because they choose to place children only in homes with a married mother and father. There are no protections under the law for the conscience rights of these agencies. Activists have successfully shut down child placement agencies like Catholic Charities in Massachusetts, Texas, Illinois, California and Washington, D.C. It is only a matter of time before they attempt to do the same here in Kansas.

As people of faith who believe in the sanctity of one-man, one-woman marriage and seek to defend the family as the “original cell of social life” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2207), I am calling upon you to support the “Protect Adoption Choice” campaign currently under way. Materials were provided to every parish for inclusion in weekly bulletins outlining how you can participate simply by making a phone call to your state representative and senator and asking them to support House Bill HB 2687 and Senate Bill SB 401, The Adoption Protection Act. Additional information about the Protect Adoption Choice campaign is featured in this issue of the *Southwest Kansas Catholic* and can also be found on the diocesan Web site, <http://www.dcdiocese.org>.

Time is of the essence. The state legislature adjourns April 6. Please review these materials, or those provided to you by your pastor, and call your legislators today. It is urgent that we seize the momentum on this important issue.

As we begin the joy of the Easter Season, we ask Jesus our Risen Lord and Savior to help us assist children in need of a home. Catholic Charities and other faith-based agencies must be able to do just that, as they have for decades. Thank you for your generous help. Jesus loves the little children, and you, more than you can ask or imagine! Happy Easter!

+ Bishop John