

September 30, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

To enhance the ongoing efforts of the Catholic Church to provide training for adults and children in matters of protection from abuse and creation of safe environments, I am pleased to announce the selection of an additional program to protect all children in the Diocese of Cleveland. *Called to Protect*[™] is a multi-media training program created by Praesidium, a national leader in abuse risk management with more than two decades of experience providing research-based educational programs to many organizations. A committee of Diocesan leadership selected the program after careful review of current safe environment training programs.

The *Called To Protect*[™] series presents current abuse prevention information for parents, children, youth and young adults. This is the first-ever program designed specifically for Catholic elementary, middle, and high-school aged youth based on the latest child development research on how children and youth learn best.

Called to Protect[™] does NOT replace the Virtus training program. We will continue to implement and track the training of staff and volunteers who work with children through the VIRTUS live training sessions and database. Praesidium will complement these efforts by reaching into the schools and the religious education programs to teach the children directly, and help inform the parents on issues of safety for their children.

I am deeply grateful to several parishes which have agreed to launch this program during this school year. The plan is to engage our parents and school-aged children (in the Catholic schools and in the religious education programs) in a pilot of *Called to Protect*[™], and then debrief with these groups after the completion of the first round of sessions. With this information in hand, we will then be able to most effectively **launch** the program Diocesan-wide **in the fall of 2010**.

I am pleased to add this program to our current safe environment initiatives. The *Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse: Revised 2007* is still the standard document promulgated in the Diocese of Cleveland that must be followed to comply with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the *Essential Norms* adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002.

Please join me in praying that this supplemental program will further express our commitment to safeguard the dignity and safety of all children.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Lennon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop of Cleveland