



## DIOCESE OF GARY

9292 BROADWAY  
MERRILLVILLE, IN 46410-7088

219-769-9292

Bishop of Gary

June 28, 2022

Dear Fathers:

As the Bishop of Gary, continuing the current policy and that of my predecessors, I promulgate the Virtus Program as the approved Safe Environment training package to be used for educating children and adults. This training is done for all children and those who have contact with them and is in accord with Catholic moral principles.

My promulgation of the decree affords the opportunity to highlight several Safe Environment policies within our program that have developed over time and will continue to evolve:

- Every parish, school and high school is to appoint a Safe Environment Coordinator responsible for implementing the diocesan youth protection policies at the local level.
- The local Safe Environment Coordinator, along with the Pastor, is required to insure every adult working with youth in any capacity undergoes Virtus training and completes 24 bulletins over a two-year period. Adults who do not meet this requirement are not allowed to work with children.
- The local Safe Environment Coordinator, along with the Pastor, is required to insure every adult working with youth in any capacity is required to undergo a criminal history background check every five years. Adults who do not meet this requirement are not allowed to work with children.
- Children in religious education programs or students in our Catholic schools are required to undergo annual Virtus training. Parental consent is required, and evidence of such training is mandatory.
- Consistent with Indiana code § 31-33-5-1, -4, the Diocese of Gary has a policy that requires an individual who has reason to believe that a child is the victim of child abuse or neglect has a duty to make an immediate oral or written report to the Indiana Department of Child Services. Oral reports can be made by calling: 1-800-800-5556.

- In the event of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor (a person under the age of 18) by diocesan personnel, the allegation is immediately reported to the authorities and then the Victim's Assistance Coordinator, Cheryl Sopo, for the diocese at (219) 588-9089.

I thank you for the good work of your parishes and schools in supporting the bishops' Charter and your cooperation with the Safe Environment Office at the Pastoral Center on all matters related to child and youth protection. Should you have any questions, please contact Kelly Venegas at (219) 769-9292, ext. 224, [kvenegas@dcdgary.org](mailto:kvenegas@dcdgary.org).

With gratitude for your priestly ministry and a promise of prayers, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. McClory".

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory  
Bishop of Gary