



Office of the Archbishop

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June 10, 2003

Dear Members of the Archdiocese of Dubuque,

Whenever we face a crisis or a challenge, as Christians we look to Jesus. Jesus taught by word and by example. His teaching has been handed down to us in the Gospel.

The sexual abuse of children and young people is a reality. It happens in the church, in our families, in our society. It is “by every standard wrong and rightly considered a crime by society; it is also an appalling sin in the eyes of God” (Pope John Paul II, April 23, 2002).

The Gospel shows Jesus’ righteous anger in the face of anyone who would abuse a child. Jesus said, “It would be better for anyone who leads astray one of these little ones who believe in me, to be drowned by a millstone around his neck, in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

When the abuse of children is perpetrated by a priest or someone else acting in the name of the church, the effects can be devastating. Trust in the goodness of God, in the church, in spiritual leaders, and even in all religion can be destroyed.

We Catholics have been facing this crisis in a particularly acute manner in recent years. Jesus rebuked the apostles for the way they were treating children and insisted that children should be allowed to approach him (cf. Matthew 19:14) without fear for their safety and well-being.

As an Archdiocese, we are committed to change. Our blueprint for change is found in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which was developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002.

To protect children in the future, we are working hard to assure that our parishes and schools are safe. Screening and background evaluations of all personnel will be intensified. Education in recognizing and responding to sexual abuse will be enhanced and expanded.

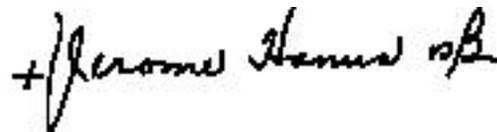
To provide assistance and support to persons who have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel, we will have in place trained persons who can coordinate pastoral outreach and care.

To ensure accountability in our procedures, I established in August 2002 a Review Board and asked that board to propose revisions to our policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. The Review Board has proposed a new policy which takes into account the requirements of the Charter and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons* (approved by the Vatican in December 2002). I am very grateful to the members of the Review Board for their hard work and excellent recommendations, all of which have been accepted.

Therefore, as Archbishop of Dubuque, I hereby approve the [“Policy for the Protection of Minors”](#) and promulgate it as normative for the Archdiocese. It becomes effective on July 1, 2003, and will be reviewed within two years.

Our patron is Saint Raphael. As the angel who accompanied Tobit’s son on a dangerous journey, Saint Raphael assured the young man’s father, “I will go with him; have no fear. In good health we shall leave you, and in good health we shall return to you, for the way is safe” (Tobit 5:16). May our patron help us to make the way safe for all our children and young people.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome Hanus" with a stylized initial "JH" at the end.

Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Dubuque