

To: Pastors and Others Assisting in Implementation of Safe Environment Policies

From: Most Reverend John J. McRaith
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro

Subject: Safe Environment Policy—Expectations at the Local Level

Date: April 27, 2007

As you know, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, requires ongoing accountability. The Diocese of Owensboro created Safe Environment policies to implement the Charter's goals. I believe very strongly in the policies enacted within our diocese. As a response to the Charter, they provide methodology for keeping our children safer and accountability for the USCCB's compliance audits.

In addition, these policies demonstrate the leadership of the Catholic Church of Western Kentucky in addressing a troubling evil in our society. Through that leadership role, we hope to create positive, lasting change.

Each diocese/eparchy will be audited after June 30, 2007, and each successive year. The Diocese of Owensboro requires your vigilant efforts to ensure that our Safe Environment policies are being implemented properly and consistently.

I expect that every Catholic parish and institution will take seriously this responsibility to help protect our children. I also expect your full cooperation with the diocesan Office of Safe Environment in preparation for the audit.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend John J. McRaith
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro