

Maintaining a safe environment within the Church for children and young people

In the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June 2002 and revised in June 2005, the bishops of the United States affirmed the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other Church personnel and to reach out to victims of sexual abuse and their families. The bishops also pledged to work with parents, civil authorities, educators, and various organizations in the community to create and maintain a safe environment within the Church for children and young people.

The Diocese of New Ulm is mandated by the USCCB's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, maintains a "safe environment" program through VIRTUS, a "Protecting God's Children" training session program.

VIRTUS is conducted cooperatively with parents, educators, and the community to provide education and training for



employees, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Response from participants has been favorable.

All employees in the diocese, as well as volunteers who work unsupervised with minors, are required to attend a VIRTUS session.

The introductory VIRTUS session is attended once. Follow-up training for employees and volunteers is done online annually or quarterly depending on one's status as determined by the diocesan safe environment coordinator.

UPCOMING VIRTUS SESSIONS

December 3 in Winsted;
December 9 in Bird Island;
January 12, 2009 in Redwood Falls.

Contact your local Catholic parish for further information.

If you or someone you know has been sexually exploited by a member of the clergy and you need to talk with someone about abuse, exploitation, or harassment, please contact the Diocese of New Ulm Victim Assistance Coordinator or the Bishop's Delegate in Matters Pertaining to Sexual Misconduct by Clergy, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; phone: (507) 359-2966.

Si usted, o alguien a quien conoce, ha sido explotado sexualmente por un clero y necesita hablar con alguien sobre abuso, explotación o acoso sexual, por favor ponerse en contacto con el Coordinador de Asistencia para Víctimas de la Diócesis de New Ulm o con el Delegado del Obispo en Asuntos que Pertenecen al Abuso Sexual por Cleros de la Diócesis de New Ulm, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; número de teléfono (507) 359-2966.