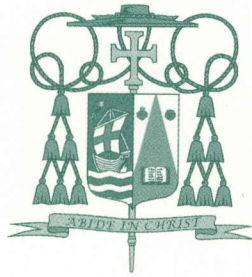


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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Pentecost 2008

Dear Friends,

Pope Benedict XVI addressed the child sexual abuse scandal that so wounded our Catholic community several times during his recent visit to the United States. He said "We are deeply ashamed and will do all possible that this cannot happen in the future."

In his keynote address to the 2008 National Safe Environment Leadership Conference, Archbishop Brunett of Seattle said "The painful reality of sexual abuse has touched all of us in ways we probably never would have imagined." However, Archbishop Brunett recognized that this painful reality is not the end of the story. We can find hope, healing, and new life in the mystery of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. We can reach for this new life by taking steps toward eradicating child sexual abuse both within the Church and within society.

Since the sexual abuse scandal became public, studies show that at least 20 percent of Americans are victims of some form of sexual abuse by the time they turn eighteen. This abuse occurs in all areas of society.

Fortunately, studies also show that children receiving prevention training felt that they are better able to protect themselves when confronted with abuse and not blame themselves for the abuse. If we want to challenge our society to join the Church in our efforts to eradicate child sexual abuse, we must set an example by developing the best training programs possible to protect our children.

For this end, the Office of Safe Environment of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, in conjunction with other offices within the Pastoral Center, has developed a curriculum to provide safe environment training for our children. "*Right Relationships*" promotes and models safe environment principles and teaches children to recognize and respond to relationships that are not "right."

I thank you for your past support of the Safe Environment Program within the diocese and encourage your active participation in the implementation of this curriculum within your area of responsibility. Together, we can assure that our Holy Father's prayer, that this cannot happen in the future, will become a reality.

Sincerely Yours in the Lord,

The Most Reverend John C. Wester
Bishop of Salt Lake City