

## Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church

The Church in the United States has responded to the sexual abuse crisis by implementing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. Our celebration last weekend of "Good Shepherd Sunday" calls to mind that our bishop, pastors and priests take seriously their responsibility to keep our children safe. Please check out the links below to read recent written responses:

By our Bishop, Robert N. Lynch

<http://blogs.dosp.org/bishoplynch/2010/04/23/shepherd/>

. . . It is my job as bishop and that of my brothers to provide the Church with every precaution to see that this horrible chapter of our history is not repeated, to be accountable and transparent, to civil authority and to God's people, and to put into place those safeguards which allow trust to once again be placed in priests and bishops. . . .

By our Pastor, Arthur J. Proulx <http://www.nativitycatholicsschool.org/Church/Bulletins/Apr-25-2010.pdf>

Dear Parishioners,

On May 17th I will celebrate my thirtieth anniversary as a Catholic Priest. I want to publically thank God for the great privilege of serving Him and His People in this wonderful vocation. My life has been truly happy, fulfilled, and interesting. This "attitude of gratitude" seems to be common among the priests I know. Almost to a man, they are deeply thankful that God has called them to serve as priests.

Sometimes when I'm stressed by the complexity of Catholic life in our parish and the world, I say, "Why couldn't I have been a priest in 1955 when all this would have been a lot simpler?" The truth is that I am grateful to be a priest now and in this place. It has been obvious to me for several years that the Priesthood (at least in the USA) is not only undergoing a purification, but also a great renewal. I sense a deeper than ever desire on the part of priests for a life of genuine holiness and selfless service. To me this is evidenced by the large number of priests (certainly most of my priest-friends) committed to a daily holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament and an ever increasing devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. When I observe the selfless giving of my brother priests, I am in awe of their generosity. They are my heroes, now more than ever.

Furthermore, though not a vocation "boom," there has been a small, but steady increase in the number of men studying for the diocesan priesthood, worldwide, in our country, and in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. And I would like to add that the quality of our seminarians is clearly outstanding. When I visit our Florida seminaries, I always leave edified, encouraged, and inspired.

That all this should be happening at a time when the sins and crimes of certain shameful priests and bishops are front page news, is both amazing and a proof of Divine action.

This is the annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations. In addition to asking God for more priestly and religious vocations, perhaps this year you will take the time to thank God for the priests, deacons, nuns, and brothers who have been good to you and helped you over the years. Perhaps, too, you will thank God for what he is doing in the here and now. It might not be an easy time to be a Catholic, but it is a blessed and holy time.

Let's continue to pray for each other.

Diocesan Office of Safe Environment

[http://home.catholicweb.com/DOSP\\_SE/](http://home.catholicweb.com/DOSP_SE/)