

# April is child abuse awareness month!

## **Signs of Sexual Abuse-**

Sexual abuse is defined as acts of sexual assault and sexual exploitation of minors by parents or other caretakers. It includes a broad range of behavior and may consist of a single incident or many incidents.

### **Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:**

- has difficulty walking or sitting;
- suddenly refuses to change for gym;
- demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge;
- becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease;
- runs away;
- exhibits withdrawal, chronic depression, has poor peer relationships;
- experiences a drop in academic performance.

### **Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when an adult authority figure (teacher, clergy, parent, coach, or other adult caregiver) close to the child, in conjunction with the above, also:**

- is unduly protective of the child;
- describes marital difficulties involving sexual relations;
- lacks social and emotional contacts outside the family;
- was sexually abused as a child.

### **What is the Church doing to protect people from abuse?**

- ALL Church employees and all volunteers that work with minors in the Diocese of Tyler are required to commit to a Code of Ethics and Integrity after being trained on appropriate behaviors.
- Each year, information is made available by every parish through our Safe Environment Program to parents/guardians of minors.
- The Church encourages reporting any sexual or physical abuse of minors or vulnerable adults to be reported to the local police or Texas Family and Protective Services 1-800-252-5400 or [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)
- Concerns about the conduct of any Church Personnel can be reported to the Promoter of Justice for the Diocese of Tyler, Rev. Gavin Vaverek, JCL, 903 266 2159 [promoter@dioceseoftyler.org](mailto:promoter@dioceseoftyler.org)
- The Church encourages prayer for all victims of abuse, particularly through intercession of St. Maria Goretti the patroness of abused children. (also Maria Goretti Network [www.mgoretti.org](http://www.mgoretti.org))

## April 27 is Blue Sunday