DIOCESE OF TYLER

1015 ESE LOOP 323
TYLER, TEXAS 75701-9663

(903) 534-1077
FAX # (903) 534-1370

January 2013

Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Tyler,

The sad reality of abuse, particularly the abuse of children, is an evil that moves us to seek God's healing mercy for victims and their families. For many years the Diocese of Tyler has asked the intercession of St. Maria Goretti, as patroness of abused children. As we begin this new year, I am asking each Catholic and every parish/mission/institution to observe a week of prayer from January 19-25 for all victims of abuse.

Our efforts to create a safer environment in the Church for all God's people have been bearing good fruit in promoting respect for children and adults in the Church. This is an effort that requires our continued commitment and attentiveness. Our ongoing efforts to be watchful of appropriate boundaries in church settings have been helpful in promoting awareness of possible abuse. Sadly, abuse has not been entirely eliminated. While we strive to eliminate all abuse, we also must reach out to the many people of all ages who still suffer from the traumatic effects of abuse. Prayer for victims not only seeks God's mercy for their healing, it reminds all of us of the reality that many people we know carry hidden wounds from abuse. Please actively enter into this week of prayer.

To help encourage the participation of the people of God in the diocese, I ask each parish/mission/institution to take the following steps for the January Safe Environment Week beginning January 19:

1. Offer a Mass that Weekend for Healing of Victims of Sexual Abuse.
2. Include a prayer of the faithful at Masses: e.g. For the healing of all victims of abuse and their families...let us pray to the Lord.
3. Use the prayer sheet on as a flier or bulletin insert that week.
4. Distribute to the children the age appropriate prayer sheet.
5. Encourage the families to pray throughout the week.
6. Consider holding a Holy Hour or other special prayer during the week.

Further information can also be found on our diocesan web site www.dioceseoftyler.org/sep. As always, each parish/mission/school should maintain records/copies of what is done in connection with the Safe Environment Program. Questions can be directed to Maria Flores in the office of Ethics and Integrity m.flores@dioceseoftyler.org or 903 534 1077 ext.188.

May God bless you and yours in this Year of Faith.

Sincerely,

+

Most Rev Joseph E. Strickland
Bishop of Tyler