



## ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

June 8, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the landmark document, The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, a set of mandatory child protection policies for every diocese in the United States that included a zero-tolerance policy for anyone credibly accused of child sexual abuse. I had the privilege of helping draft both the Charter and the accompanying Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, which were favorably voted on by the bishops of the United States and approved for their promulgation by the Holy See.

It was our hope 20 years ago, as it remains today, that this clear and decisive action would bring about real and lasting reforms. We also hoped for a consistent application of policies that would ensure the Church throughout the United States was doing everything possible to prevent the harm of children in its care, lead to greater trust through accountability and transparency, and bring about healing for survivors of abuse by ministers of the Church.

In the ensuing years since its passage, I have seen firsthand the effectiveness of the Charter in achieving these goals. Here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, where written child protection policies had been in place since the early 1990s, countless people have worked together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through diligent compliance with the Charter. Clergy, religious, and lay employees and volunteers have worked together to not only meet the standards defined by the Charter, but to exceed them, all in an effort to ensure the safety of our young people. Through this work, we have made great strides toward achieving greater accountability, transparency, and the ultimate goal of creating and maintaining a safe environment for children.

Just as importantly, over these past 20 years, I have had the powerful privilege of being taken into the trust of many abuse survivors who courageously shared with me their experiences and the impact it has had on them and those close to them. Those encounters are lasting reminders of the grievous harm caused by ministers of the Church and of the absolute necessity that everything possible is done to prevent such harm from ever happening to a single child in our care. I am eternally grateful to the survivors for their courage and for allowing me to re-state the wrongs of the Church and again apologize on its behalf. My pledge and my personal commitment to rooting out abuse from the life of the Church in Baltimore remains steadfast and unmovable.

June 7, 2022

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While anniversaries are often happy occasions, this milestone is anything but, for it is a painful reminder of the events that led up to the Charter's creation and of the criminal nature that lies at the heart of the behavior, it seeks to prevent. I pray that the information and resources included on our [website](#) are helpful to those seeking more information about the extent to which the Church has and continues to work to bring about safe environments for children and young people. It is important we hold accountable those who seek to harm the vulnerable who are in our care and to promote justice and healing for those harmed by representatives of the Church.

Please join me in praying for all victims of abuse and for all who work to ensure the safety of youth through the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children & Young People in our Archdiocese.

With continued commitment, I remain

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William E. Lori". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Archbishop of Baltimore