



THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

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**Diocese of Charleston to Hold Special Mass in Commemoration of
Child Abuse Prevention Month**

~ New Diocesan Policy on Addressing Sexual Abuse Allegations Takes Effect Same Day ~

CHARLESTON, SC (April 11, 2012) – April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone is observing the month long initiative by celebrating a special Mass on Sunday, April 15 at 5:15 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Charleston. This Mass will be offered for the healing of child sexual abuse victims and their families, and in recognition of the Diocese’s newly adopted Policy that addresses sexual abuse allegations. “This special Mass will be an opportunity for the Catholic community to pray for all victims of abuse and to remind everyone about the importance of protecting God’s children,” said Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone, Bishop of Charleston.

April 15 also marks the day in which the *Policy Concerning Allegations of Sexual Misconduct or Abuse of a Minor by Church Personnel (2012)* goes into effect. “There are three major revisions to the Policy,” said Bishop Guglielmone. “The first is new restrictions when communicating with youth through social media. The second is closing any ambiguity regarding background screening and safe environment training of employees and volunteers. The third gives more independence to the advisory board that assesses allegations.”

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A Policy that addresses child abuse allegations has been in place in the Diocese since 1994. This revised Policy replaces the one the Diocese adopted in August 2003 which mandated the screening of all diocesan personnel, especially those who may have regular contact with children, and an educational program to help diocesan personnel create and maintain safe environments for young people. It also outlines the diocese's response when an allegation of child abuse has been made against diocesan personnel. "Keeping our children and young people safe is a top priority for me and for the Diocese of Charleston," said Bishop Guglielmone.

Bishop Guglielmone invites everyone to take part in the special Mass at the Cathedral. He also encourages the Faithful within the Diocese of Charleston to pray for victims of sexual abuse and for the protection of all young people during the month of April.

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