



Catholic Diocese of Austin  
P.O. Box 13327  
Austin, TX 78711

August 1, 2008

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In the summer of 2001, the Catholic Diocese of Austin inaugurated a groundbreaking program called *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry*. Our program was not a response to the national scandals which began to surface over the course of the following year: it was borne out of recognition that the Church must first be a protector of all God's children. The image of Jesus saying to his apostles "Let the children come to me" (Matthew 19:14) is a powerful one that should be echoed in all that we do for the Church.

At our baptism we are each called to serve, using those gifts we have been given by God. To share in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a profound responsibility. The joy in sharing in the mission of Jesus' work here on earth is tempered by the responsibility to act in such a way that conforms to the attitudes and actions of Christ. For us to accomplish this faithfully requires prayerful reflection and understanding of our purpose in service to the people of God. In all our actions we must always exemplify Jesus' deep, abiding respect for each human being. Our diocesan *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* program provides guidelines and information to so.

*Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* is an education and screening program required of all individuals in the Catholic Diocese of Austin (paid and volunteer) that serve our youth and those adults considered vulnerable due to age or some incapacity. The program requires your completion of two parts: the submission of an "Application for Ministry" which includes your permission for the diocese to complete a background check, and your attendance at an Ethics and Integrity in Ministry workshop. At the workshop you will watch a program titled Called to Protect, participate in discussions related to the program you view and review this book entitled Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry. At the end you will sign a document stating you agree to abide by the policies explained herein.

As you participate in this process, you join more than 30,000 members of our Diocese who have already done so. I am sincerely grateful for the generous ways in which you offer your time and gifts to the service of God's people as we strive to foster God's Kingdom among us in Central Texas. It is through the efforts and collaboration of priests, religious, deacons, lay those who ministers and volunteers that we are able to serve those who are entrusted to us and to lead them in the ways of faith.

Wishing you God's blessings and with gratitude for your leadership, I remain

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory M. Aymond".

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond  
Bishop of Austin