

August 31, 2011

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

Our Catholic tradition has always affirmed the dignity of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God. Every person with whom we come in contact deserves to be seen by us with the eyes of God. We know that ministry with children and youth, in particular, is a sacred trust. We, the parishes of Our Lady of Fatima and St. Helen are committed to preserve, at all times and in all places, this sacred trust that is rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ.

In 2002, the United States Bishops approved The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in an effort to protect children and youth from sexual abuse at all levels of church life and to restore trust in a Church scarred by the scandal of clergy sexual abuse. Article 12 of the charter directs all dioceses to create programs and processes to teach children and youth about sexual abuse and its prevention. In the diocese of Albany, this training will take place in all parishes each year in age-appropriate ways.

This year this safe environment training will take place **Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>** and **Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>** during faith formation sessions. Your child will spend part of their session time discussing personal safety. If interested, parents are welcome to stay and view these videos with their young person. You are welcome to call Anna Denney at St. Helen's at 377-3119 or Lisa Kuban at Our Lady of Fatima at 370-0027 if you have any questions or concerns about this training.

In addition to this discussion, Youth Ministry will sponsor a program in the Spring in the Christian Approach on Sexuality. There will be an informational meeting for parents when this session will be scheduled.

Please return the tear-off at the bottom of this letter to your child's catechist **only if you choose to opt your child out** of the safe environment training. If we do not hear from you by **Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**, we will assume you give permission for your child to participate in the safe environment training. We look forward to working with you as we partner to give our children the safest possible environment to grow in faith, both in our church and in our homes.

Sincerely in Christ,

Anna Denney & Lisa Kuban  
Pastoral Associates for Youth Ministry

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### Safe Environment Training for Children and Youth

\_\_\_\_\_ I request that my child(ren) not participate in the Safe Environment session on October 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>. I understand that my child(ren) may stay in the room with his/her catechist while the training takes place. I will contact the parish to request resources on this topic to teach my child at home.

Child(ren)'s Name(s):

Parent/Guardian:

Date: