

June 5, 2002

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

On June 13-15, the 285 active bishops of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will be gathering in Dallas for a special meeting to review "The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse. The proposed text spells out a number of specific proposals to ensure that the Church will always be a "safe environment" for children and young people. The text is the result of many listening sessions held by bishops throughout the country with laity, religious, and clergy; victims and personnel working with victims, as well as psychologists and child protection experts also weighed in on the text and gave their advice and experience. The centerpiece of the Charter focuses on the words of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, when he met with the United States cardinals a few weeks ago and stated: *"There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young."*

I have written to all the priests of the Archdiocese and have asked that every parish set aside some time during the days of June 13-15 for Eucharist Adoration and special prayer. We are also planning for a national day of prayer and reconciliation for the feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross on Saturday, September 14, 2002. At this time, I ask for your own solidarity with us by prayer and if you should choose, fasting.

Again, in the name of the Church, I express our deepest apologies to any person who was ever sexually abused by a priest or religious serving in the name of the Church. Obviously, our apologies must be accompanied by effective action to prevent sexual abuse in the future; hence the purpose of our Dallas gathering.

I thank you for your patience with this very painful experience for our Church and I know that you join me in hope and prayer that this whole development will be an opportunity for purification and renewal of the priesthood and the Church.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Adam Cardinal Maida
Archbishop of Detroit