



Catholic Diocese of Victoria

Office of the Bishop

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March 19, 2021
Feast of St. Joseph

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The care and protection of children, minors, and persons with vulnerabilities is central to the very mission of the Church. We are called to imitate Jesus Christ, to protect and respect the dignity of all those entrusted to our care. We are interconnected, as members of the Body of Christ, and thus responsible for the well-being of others.

The Diocese has mandated policy, protocols, screening, and training for Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment (RMSE) in our communities for many years. The existing policies and protocols were revised as we reconfirm our commitment to ensure a safe environment for all. In full cooperation with civil authorities, the policies and protocols are mandated to protect from harm, and to help victims of historical abuse find assistance and support on their healing journey.

The RMSE Protocols have been modified in the hope of being clearer and more accessible, and the Diocesan website (www.rcdvictoria.org) has been updated with information for quick reference. Most importantly, the Diocese has contracted an **outside independent In-Take Service Agency** to serve as the first point of contact for all cases of sexual abuse. A trained counsellor will respond to the toll-free number (**1-800-968-3146**) to provide assistance with the process for reporting claims.

We take seriously our responsibility to care for one another, and to facilitate healing for those who have been harmed. Our focus on the essentials in life, including the safety, protection and well-being of our communities, has renewed our pastoral commitment to Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment as we look to the future with renewed faith and hope.

St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, foster father of Jesus, Principal Patron of Canada, and Patron of the Universal Church, pray for us.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria