April 5, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each April, the Church in the United States observes National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This observance provides the opportunity to renew our commitment to provide safe places where children and young people may gather, study, pray and enjoy fellowship. The public health crisis has changed many things, but it has not diminished our commitment to help young people encounter and build a relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Please know of my deep appreciation for the priests, religious and laity who serve as teachers and role models for our children and youth. Local ministries help support parents in their duty to be the first and best teachers of faith within the home, the domestic Church.

Local safe environment teams at our parishes and schools use training and resources that are provided through our Diocesan Office for Child and Youth Protection. Together, we diligently work to fulfill the promise to protect and the pledge to heal given to us through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This work includes participation in an annual audit of Diocesan efforts by the USCCB. I encourage you to access the resources that are available at Resources for Families, Schools and Parishes | Diocese of Raleigh. There are also online safe environment classes (for adults) that can be found at: Diocesan Event Calendar (dioceseofraleigh.org). Please be assured of my prayerful support for our safe environment efforts as we continue the important work of giving young people a place to grow in age, wisdom, and grace.

Throughout this month of April, I ask you to pray especially for all those who have experienced abuse and for all involved in healing the pain caused by abuse. As we celebrate the joy of Easter, may our Risen Lord Jesus bless us with His peace.

In Christ,

[Signature]
Luis Rafael Zarama, J.C.L.
Bishop of Raleigh