

October 17, 2003

My Dear Friends in Christ,

I am sending to you today the attached *Code of Ministerial Behavior*, which I have promulgated as particular law for the Archdiocese of Boston. It is issued *ad experimentum* for one year and now forms an integral part of article two of the Archdiocesan *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children*, “Safe Environment Programs.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has mandated that each diocese/eparchy adopt such a *Code of Ministerial Behavior* for all clergy and other personnel. This particular text is based on the “Model Code of Pastoral Conduct,” published by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group, which was recommended to us by the Conference. It has been modified in accord with insights we have received from the Commission for the Protection of Children and the “Boundary Guidelines” developed by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. Also, many initial comments received following a preliminary review of the document by the Implementation and Oversight Committee and Review Board have been incorporated. Other comments have been deferred for further discussion during the period of ongoing consultation and review.

As is stated clearly in the decree of promulgation, the full process of developing a *Code of Ministerial Behavior* for the Archdiocese of Boston is not yet complete. During this coming year, I wish to encourage a broad consultation of this document, a process leading to further review and revision, and ultimately to a permanent *Code* that is suitable to our Archdiocese.

This consultation will include each of the bodies officially constituted for the review and revision of our *Policies and Procedures*, together with members of the faithful in our parishes, schools, and other institutions and agencies of the Archdiocese. The *Code of Ministerial Behavior* is being disseminated widely in the hope of fostering this consultation among the lay faithful, consecrated persons, and the clergy.

The practice and observance of this *Code* will assist us in this consultation and review. Our primary goal remains the protection of children, a goal that requires us to examine and to establish effective standards of awareness, practice, and behavior for safe environments in all contexts of the life and mission of our Church.

As is stated in the *Code*, any violation of its provisions is to be reported to the Secretary for Ministerial Personnel for corrective or disciplinary action. Accountability is one of the important provisions in the *Code*; during this coming year I trust that it will be developed further during the consultation.

I hope and pray that this *Code of Ministerial Behavior* will serve us well as we continue in our ongoing efforts to protect children and create safe environments.

Asking God to bless you, I remain devotedly yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

**DECREE**  
**In the Name of God.**

Whereas on 26 June 2003 the Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon, then Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Boston, decreed the *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children* as particular law for the Archdiocese of Boston;

Whereas the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated that in each diocese/eparchy “there will be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people” (article 6);

I hereby promulgate the *Code of Ministerial Behavior* as particular law for the Archdiocese of Boston and order that it be placed in article two of the Archdiocesan *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children*, “Safe Environment Programs.”

This *Code* is decreed *ad experimentum* for one (1) year, in order that a broad consultation be undertaken among the lay faithful, consecrated persons, and clergy of the Archdiocese. The results of this consultation are to be forwarded to the bodies constituted for the review and revision of the Archdiocesan *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children*. A permanent *Code of Ministerial Behavior* that is suitable to our Archdiocese is then to be adopted within one (1) year of the effective date of this decree.

Any violation of the provisions of this *Code* is to be reported to the Secretary for Ministerial Personnel for corrective or disciplinary action.

The *Code of Ministerial Behavior* is promulgated by sending a copy to the clergy, archdiocesan personnel, and volunteers currently serving in the Archdiocese of Boston; by sending copies to each parish and institution of the Archdiocese with the requirement that the pastor of the parish or director of the institution distribute a copy to each employee and volunteer; and by publication in *The Pilot*.

Given at the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Boston,  
this 17<sup>th</sup> day of October A.D. 2003

To take effect the 24th day of October, 2003

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Archbishop of Boston

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Chancellor

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