CHRISTMAS
MASS
SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE:
5 PM – CHILDREN’S MASS
8 PM – VIGIL MASS

CHRISTMAS DAY:
10 AM

NEW YEAR’S MASS
NEW YEAR’S EVE – 5 PM
NEW YEAR’S DAY – 10 AM
The question put to Jesus in today's gospel is also put to us today: "Are you the one?" Are you the one who will give guidance to the children in your life or must they look to TV sitcoms, films, videos and music lyrics for direction? Are you the ones? Will you be the one?


**FAMILY PERSPECTIVE** – The question put to Jesus in today's gospel is also put to us today: "Are you the one?" Are you the one who will give guidance to the children in your life or must they look to TV sitcoms, films, videos and music lyrics for direction? Are you the ones? Will you be the one?

**NEXT SUNDAY’S READINGS**
Isaiah 7:10-14
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

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**WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE**
Dec. 15th – 21st

Sunday, Dec. 15th – Religious Education from 9:30 – 11 AM
Sunday, Dec. 15th – Adult Enrichment Class in The social hall, 9:30-11 AM
Monday, Dec. 16th – Cub Scouts, 6:30 PM
Monday, Dec. 16th – Legion of Mary in Rel Ed Bldg Room 4, 7 PM
Monday, Dec. 16th – Charismatic Prayer Group in Social Hall, 7 PM
Tuesday, Dec. 17th – Parish Penance Service, 7 PM
Wednesday, Dec. 18th – Boy Scouts, 6-9 PM
Thursday, Dec. 19th – Faith Sharing Group in Den after 9 AM Mass

**MISSION FOR LITURGY AND WORSHIP**

**ALTAR SERVERS** for Sat/Sun Dec. 21-22
5:00 PM Mass: Hannah Fletcher, Bob & Luke O’Brien
8:15 AM Mass: Nathan, Emma & Hannah Maysilie
1:15 AM Mass: Molly & Jacob Fleming, Audrianna Dusseau
Coordinator is Kelli Maysilie.

**LECTORS** for Sat/Sun Dec. 21-22
5 PM MASS – Pat Renault
8:15 AM MASS – Barb Bowker
11:15 AM MASS – Tina Jacoby
Coordinator is Dianne Giampietro.

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EMHC)** for Sat/Sun Dec. 21-22
5:00 PM: Jen Gentile, Charles & Holly Fletcher, Dan Landis, Barbara Reichart
8:15 AM: Doug Barnhart, Liz Kohler, John & Kelli Maysilie, Beth Smith
11:15 AM: Andy Altabelli, Niki Davis, Joyce Menges, John Schlaline, Jr., Barb Wantz
Coordinator is Claire Wentz.

**PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS** – Lasting joy is a hallmark of a Christian. Where can you bring joy this week? Find your strength in God’s promise. (Isaiah 35:16, 10) If God may be calling you to the priesthood or consecrated life, visit our website at www.hbgdiocese.org, call Father Jonathan Sawicki at 717-857-4804 or write: frjsawacki@hbgdiocese.org.

The parish offices will be closed on the following days for the Christmas and New Year’s Holiday: Closed on Dec. 25th-27th, closing early Dec. 24th
Closed on Jan. 1st, closing early Dec. 31st.
PARISH PENANCE SERVICE – This Tuesday, Dec. 17th, we will hold our Parish Advent Penance Service at 7 PM. We will have priests here for confession.

GROCERY CERTIFICATES – Please know how very grateful we are to all of you who support our Grocery Certificate Program and ultimately our Religious Education Program. IHM receives a 5% profit from the sale of all the grocery cards purchased. Before going for groceries, please consider purchasing Wels or Giant cards after each Mass at the front entrance. Cards can also be purchased in the parish office during the work week. Thank you for your support of this wonderful program! During the week of Dec. 8, 2019 we sold $990 for a profit of $49.50.

ADVENT SOUP AND SERMON SCHEDULE – Our final Advent Prayer Service and luncheon will be held Wednesday 12 Noon to 1 PM. Wednesday, Dec. 18th – Trinity Lutheran, East Berlin Topic: LOVE

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES
St. Vincent, Hanover, Dec. 15th, 2 PM
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Dec. 17th, 7 PM
St. Joseph, Hanover, Dec. 18th, 7 PM
St. Joseph, Bonneauville, Dec. 19th, 7 PM
St. Aloysius, Littlestown, Dec. 21st, 10 AM

Fusion is Immaculate Heart of Mary’s youth ministry; open to all teenagers in grades 8 to 12. Coming in 2020 – Amplify (middle school ministry for all youths in grades 5 to 7). Stay tuned for more information!

Dec 15: Youth Night, Adoration & Christmas Blast 3:0, 5 – 8 PM
Jan 12, 2020: Pro-Life Night, 5 – 7:30 PM
Jan 26, 2020: Youth Night, 5 – 7:30 PM
For more information, please call or email Paul Oakes: (717) 259-0611 ext.8 or poakes@hbgdiocese.org

2019 DIOCESAN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN - The 2019 Diocesan Annual Campaign (formerly known as the Bishop’s Lenten Appeal) is coming to a close. Pledge reminders have been mailed to all donors who have a pledge balance for the 2019 effort. Our parish benefits from the many ministries and educational programs that the Diocese supports. Please be sure to honor your commitment for the Diocesan Annual Campaign. Gifts made before Dec. 31, 2019 may provide tax benefits to you.

If you have not made a gift to this year’s campaign, it is not too late. You can make your gift securely online at www.hbgdiocese.org/dac. 100% of the monies collected over our parish goal are returned to the Parish for our use. As you think about your personal philanthropy at the end of the year, please consider your Parish and the many programs supported by the Diocese that benefit our parish.

END OF THE YEAR NOTICES – Most taxpayers will no longer need to itemize their deductions and will take the standard deduction amount. Therefore, since many people no longer use the end-of-year statements for tax purposes, we will only send out to those who request them. If you are interested in receiving a statement, please contact Anita in the parish office. The Diocese will no longer automatically generate year end statements, unless it is requested by the donor. You may contact the Office of Stewardship & Development at the Diocese at 717-657-4804 ext 245.

ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA SCHOOL 2020-2021 ENROLLMENT – Know someone who is not happy with their child’s current school environment or looking for the right school to send their child off to Kindergarten or Pre-Kindergarten? Please have them complete the Google form located on the sidebar of our school’s website www.stck8school.org and someone will be in contact with them. We expect our Application for Enrollment to be available by the last week of January. Please note that children eligible for Kindergarten should be five years of age by Sept. 1, 2020. If you have any questions, contact Melissa Guy at 717-637-3135.

DELONE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL is accepting online admissions applications for the 2020-2021 school year. Visit www.delonecatholic.org and click on Admissions to apply. New student applications received by Dec. 31 will save $25 off the registration fee. Contact Jennifer Hart at jhart@delonecatholic.org for information.

Delone Placement Testing for incoming Freshmen will take place at Delone HS in the school cafeteria on Sat. Jan. 11th and Sat. Feb. 8th from 9AM -1PM. To register, please visit the school website and click on Admissions/Placement Testing.

Delone Catholic High School is currently seeking to hire a full-time Math/Science Teacher and a full-time Building Service Worker. Please visit the school website at www.delonecatholic.org/About/Employment for the complete job posting and how to apply.

PARISH CARING COMMITTEE – Assists parishioners on an as needed basis, in times of need or stress and provides visitation, care giver relief, meals, errands, light household chores and local transportation. To request assistance or to become a Caring Committee Volunteer, contact Cathy Gunzelman at 717-225-5059.

THANKS TO
WELCOME! We welcome the following new members into our parish family:
Clyde & Barbara Krebs & family, Abbottstown
Julianne Rowe & family, Hanover
Brian & Ruth Kaley, Dover
Derek & Amanda Albin & family, Spring Grove
Mark & Amy Gingrich & family, Dover

ABBOTSTOWN/EAST BERLIN FOOD BANK – The food pantry in East Berlin held on Nov. 6th served 51 families which included 133 individuals. The number of families served at the Abbottstown location on Nov. 7th was 35 for a total of 103 individuals. The link to the Time to Sign Up page for the food pantry on Wednesday, Dec. 4th at the East Berlin location is www.volunteersignup.org/QJF99 and Thursday, Dec. 5th at the Abbottstown location is www.volunteersignup.org/BDB8J. Please remember to drop off health/beauty items, such as soaps, toothbrushes, diapers, as well LAUNDRY DETERGENT, etc. and place them in the food pantry barrels.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students at Delone Catholic High School for achieving honor roll status:
FIRST HONORS: Audrey & Abigail Sell, Jacob Fleming
SECOND HONORS: Harrison Smith, Avery Kuntz & Julia O’Brien

OCTOBER FINANCIAL REPORT –
Monthly Budget $36,400.00
Income for Oct. 6th $10,811.00
Oct. 13th 9,062.04
Oct. 20th 9,116.25
Oct. 27th 8,819.25
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME $37,808.54

ADDITIONAL COLLECTIONS:
Capital Improvements $1,696.70
World Mission Collection 1,829.00

HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES - You may not have noticed, but last week more handicapped parking spaces were added on the rectory side of the Church and 2 spaces right behind the Church. We urge and encourage those of you who are in need of this service to please use them. They are so much closer to the Church. You may use the CHURCH EXIT to get into the spaces on Saturday night or for 8:15 Mass on Sunday. For the 11:15 Mass, you may use this entrance until 10:45 and be parked before the children are being dismissed from Religious Education classes. For safety reasons, please do not come in the EXIT and park the wrong way along the side of the Church. Please note ~ the same rules apply here as elsewhere in using these spaces. You must have a Handicapped Placard or it be indicated on your license plate. Thank you!

CHILDREN'S LITURGY - As you know, our children (ages 3 through 2nd grade) have a wonderful opportunity at the 11:15 Mass when they are called forth and dismissed for “Children's Liturgy of the Word,” the ability to learn about the scripture readings on their level. We are in great need of more volunteers, who have Diocesan clearances to participate in this ministry. If we have a pool of at least 6 to 8 volunteers, then everyone only has a turn every 6 weeks or so. PLEASE consider offering your services for this wonderful ministry for our children. If you are able to help out, please call Sister Rosanne @ (717) 259-0611, ext. 7

ART CONTEST – The Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (HDCCW) invites girls in grades 9-12 in the Diocese of Harrisburg to enter an art contest. The task: design the cover for the 95th Annual HDCCW Convention on April 25, 2020. The art work should be an original drawing or painting for a 9 x 12 folder and based on the Convention theme “Rejoice and be Thankful”. The grand prize is $150, second prize is $75 and third prize is $50. The deadline to enter is Jan. 20, 2020. For complete details and Contest Guidelines, please refer to the HDCCW website http://hdccw.webs.com/. You may also contact HDCCW at 717-860-0700 or email hdccw1@gmail.com with questions.

CALLING ALL CHILDREN - It's that time of year again when we are looking for children for our "Children's Choir" for the 5:00 Mass on Christmas Eve. Children ages 4 and over are welcome to join us. As usual, practices will take place on Sunday afternoons in December from 3:00-4:00 PM. If your child is interested, please call Sister Rosanne @ (717) 259-0611, ext. 7.

RUTH’S HARVEST – Ruth’s Harvest packing will be Wednesday, Oct. 23rd from 10-11 AM at the Abbottstown Fire Hall. Consider joining others in this ecumenical ministry as we bag single-serving food items for elementary school students to take to their homes. For more information, call Pat Renaut at 717-637-1110.

PARISH FLOWER BEDS – Fall is officially here and it is time to clean out the flower beds for the winter. Anyone who “adopted” a flower bed needs to trim back and clean out their respective flower beds. Thank you for making everything look so beautiful!

FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION – Our parish contributed a total of $2,000.00 in our annual Food Pantry
A FRIENDLY REMINDER
From the middle of September until the beginning of May, Religious Education Classes are in session! Please be extra mindful of SAFETY on Sunday mornings after the 8:15 Mass as you are leaving the parking lot (especially if you are parked on the side of or behind the Church). That is when our children are being dropped off for CCD. Cars are moving and children are walking and most likely "aren't looking/noticing" that cars are backing up and pulling out.

Also around 11:00 AM when children are being dismissed from the Religious Education Center and are waiting for their parents to "pull up in the car line" to pick them up. There are 150 children in the CCD and they and their safety are our #1 priority!

If you are in need of a "Handicap Parking" spot, please plan on coming to the 11:15 Mass by 10:55 AM. You can come in the EXIT driveway and pull right into one of the spots. Parents pick their children up beginning at 11:00 AM. Once their cars start moving, it is about safety! If you choose not to do this and you get in the "parent car line" then please be patient. Please do not try and come up along side the cars that are in line. Most of the time all children get in their cars on the right hand side where adults are right there with them. Occasionally, the children need to get in on the left side because of infants in the car. It takes about 7 minutes to get every child in their car and on their way home safely. Thank you for your understanding!

AERO ENERGY HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROGRAM –
This program was established to provide Aero Energy customers an opportunity to give to our church. To participate, Aero Energy customers sign up by phone or online and Aero Energy donates 4 cents for every gallon of fuel they use to us. Please call if you are not already part of this wonderful program. It’s an easy way to benefit Immaculate Heart of Mary. Last heating season, IHM was among the top 5 churches in donations received! To sign up, call 888-827-17136.

HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROGRAM
We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to all those who participate in the Aero Energy House of Worship Program. Our parish received a check in the amount of $527.16 from this past heating season! IHM receives 4 cents per gallon for anyone using heating oil or propane that is a current customer of Aero Energy or anyone who becomes a NEW customer. If you are not already participating in this program and would like to, please call Aero Energy at 888-827-1713 to sign up for the House of Worship Program. There is no additional cost to anyone who participates – it is a donation from Aero Energy to our church. Thanks to all who participate!

OFFERTORY PROCESSION – For the benefit of you, our long-time parishioners as well as you, our NEW parishioners ~ we invite you and your family to participate in the Offertory Procession when you come to Mass on Saturday night or Sunday.

Perhaps you have NOT noticed the 3 crosses and the picture frame on the ledge behind the last pew (right hand side) as you come into Church. There is an invitation from Fr. Burger in the frame for you to bring...
forth the gifts at the Offertory time. You just need to take the 3 crosses to the pew with you, and when the altar server goes to the back of the Church with the Processional Cross, you get out of your pew and head to the back of the Church. One of the ushers is there to assist you, if necessary. The gifts (the paten of hosts and the cruet of wine) are on the ledge by the picture frame. You bring those gifts, as well as the collection basket forward, following the altar server with the cross. Please consider having your family participate in the Offertory Procession. This is a simple way to participate more fully in the celebration of the Mass.

SCAM ALERT! Once again someone is using the Pastor’s name to scam people into buying gift cards or giving their cell number to them. Neither Fr. Burger, nor any Diocesan Priest, will ever ask you to supply him with gift cards or give your cell number in order to help him out. Please DO NOT respond to any emails you may receive or any text message asking if you are available to do him a favor and purchase gift cards for someone who is sick.

HEALING HEARTS is a support group for widows and widowers. The group will meet once a week on Thursday nights from 6pm until 7:30 pm at Kim Aiello’s house at 1650 Pine Run Road, East Berlin. The meetings will consist of prayer, bible study, share time, Christian music, group social outings, like going to see a Christian movie, attending a Christian Concert, or listening to a Christian Speaker. The support group goal is to help heal the broken heart and replace sorrow with joy, by finding peace through a personal relationship with the Lord. Contact Kim Aiello at 717-476-7504 or emailing her at jkilo1@hotmail.com.

SUMMER WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE
Saturday 5 PM, Sunday 8:15 AM and 10:15 AM

ARE YOU CARING FOR AN AGING PERSON?
There is a safe website where you can get help and ideas. Go to www.agingcare.com. You can sign up for their emailed newsletter at the bottom of the home page. I have been following the newsletters and find a lot of articles which may be useful. If I can be of any help, please contact me at roywainwright3@gmail.com or 717-619-7243.

FLOWERS – Looking for a way to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion? A beautiful way would be to order flowers on the altar. Most weekends are available from now through the end of the year. Please call Anita in the parish office to make arrangements.

MASS INTENTIONS – Mass intentions are a wonderful way to celebrate a special occasion, remember those who have died or are sick and in need of our prayers. Please consider this as a “gift” for someone. Call Anita in the Parish Office to arrange your Mass intentions.

PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL
St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snare of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

NEW ENTRANCE PROCEDURE FOR THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER –
I want to let you know about a new entrance procedure that we now have in place when coming to the parish office and the Religious Education Center. You will now find that the doors will be locked. We ask that you please ring the bell on the wall outside the door and you will be buzzed into the building. This safety system which now allows the staff to see who is at the door was installed this last week.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELING SERVICES:
Depression and anxiety can occur when we have a loss or a major change in our life. A licensed skilled therapist can help you by listening, processing, and giving you the power to make positive change. Catholic Charities Counseling Services is accepting new clients for four office locations throughout the Diocese. Catholic Charities Counseling is for anyone: children, adolescents, adults, and couples. Services are provided in a confidential office setting. Services include individual and family therapy, marital counseling, and parent-child counseling. We accept Medical Assistance, or clients can pay for services (discount fee schedule available). Just call for an appointment: Capital Region 717-233-7978; Lancaster 717-299-3659 or 717-392-2113 (Espanol); York 717-845-2696; Paradise School Office (Abbottstown) 717-259-9537. Visit www.cchbg.org for more information.

Don’t Get Scammed!
Scammers are now posing as priests and other clergy. In this latest scam, you might receive an email or a text message that appears to be from your Pastor or another priest that you may know. The scammer ask you to help
someone in need by purchasing a gift card and to provide the codes on that card.

Here’s how to protect yourself from being scammed.
1. Know that scammers are out there. Be suspicious of any request for funds of any type via an email message or a text message. Verify any request with a call to the person who supposedly sent it or a call to the phone number of the text that you received.
2. Know that any email from a priest should be from a diocesan or parish email account. Messages sent from free services, such as Gmail or Yahoo, are more likely to be scammers.
3. Many clergy do not share their cell phone numbers publicly. If you receive a text message from someone not on your phone’s contact list, be suspicious.
4. Know that priests will NEVER ask for financial transactions via email or text messages.

IMPORTANT CHANGE FOR HANOVER HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS – The Hanover Hospital – UPMC Pinnacle Health has issued the following changes to their policy effective December 2018.

1. Clergy will not be able to view denominational lists at the front desk.
2. Clergy will not be able to obtain patient information at the front desk unless they have the patient’s name.
3. If the patient indicates a congregational affiliation in the admissions interview, the Chaplain will call the congregation. If the patient indicates to the Chaplain on his or her rounds that he or she belongs to a particular congregation and gives permission the Chaplain will call the congregation.
4. In an emergency situation if the patient or family indicates a congregational affiliation to the Chaplain or other staff and gives permission to call the congregation, every effort will be made to notify the congregation.

Because of these changes, it is very important that a family member contacts the parish when someone is admitted.

WEEKDAY MASS PARKING – Anyone attending the weekday Masses are asked to park in the lot beside and behind the Church whenever there is snow and ice. This parking area will be made ready first for anyone on the property.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT – It has been noted that some people, who are dropped off or picked up for Mass, are doing so at the steps right along West Canal Road. Especially at night, and given the adjacent hill, it is deemed this is unsafe given the speed and flow of traffic. For accessible and safe access to the Church at all times, please use the side social hall doors. Thank you.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY – CAN YOU DONATE NEW YARN? During the last year, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has made over 50 items for our own parishioners, Rachel’s Vineyard retreatants, Cross Keys Village Skilled Nursing patients, Spiritrust Lutheran hospice and Hanover Hospital Maternity. We rely on your donations to help with our yarn expense. We can always use red, white and blue yarn for military veterans in hospice care. Please drop off your donations in the covered gray boxes at the entrances to the church. If you know of anyone who would benefit from a prayer shawl, please call the parish office at 717-259-0611. Thank you!

SUGGESTION CARDS are available on the back ledges and at the entrances of the church. If you have any suggestions on how to make our parish better, please fill one out and return it in the collection basket.

BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION – Please keep collecting and sending in those BoxTops for Education for St. Teresa School. If you’d like to help out trimming those BoxTops, please contact kwenger@hotmail.com. All help is appreciated!

EVENT NOTICE – I have been a parishioner at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church for more than 40 years and employed in the newspaper business for more than 20 years. We have many wonderful events happening here at our parish and we’d like to get the word out to the public. Please feel free to send me any events that would be of interest to our local community – from Lenten dinners to youth events to Bible studies and everything in between! You can send information to: 6fletch@embarqmail.com. Don’t forget to tell me the following: WHAT is the event? WHO is invited? WHEN is the event? WHERE is the event? WHY should people attend? HOW can they get more information? If you have any questions, feel free to call or text me at 717-357-8051. Thank you! Holly Fletcher

HEARING IMPAIRED – Anyone who is hearing impaired may find it helpful to sit in Pew #9 on the Sacristy side. You will notice “hearing impaired” stickers on the side of the pew to indicate the best place to sit if you are hearing impaired.

HANDICAP PARKING – Please note that handicap parking spaces are available for parking near the social hall entrance to the Church. If you are attending the 11:15 AM Mass, in order to avoid the traffic associated with religious education letting out, the following two options are recommended: EITHER come in the EXIT
CHILDREN’S CHAPEL – For everyone’s information, especially for those who may be new to our parish, there is a so-called Children’s Chapel or Cry Room here in the Church. It’s located in the front left corner of the church, where a restroom is also located. As a parish family, we want children and families to be welcome here at Mass, and so it’s important to have an appropriate place in the church for babies and young children when they get fussy and need extra attention. We really want to encourage parents to use this space to tend to their children as needed. Please, feel free to just get up when need be from the body of the church, and utilize this space. Then you can better tend to your children without feeling like you’re being watched. And this will also allow the other parishioners to be able to more fully focus on worshiping.

CREMATION
Since 1963, Catholics have been allowed to choose cremation over burial as a means of laying a loved one to rest. Cremation is a popular choice since it is less expensive and more manageable than a full burial. Cremation, like death, is final. But that doesn’t mean you won’t have second thoughts. Susan Skiles Luke, a marketing consultant in Columbia, Missouri, had her mother cremated and buried in a family plot. Now, she wishes it was her mother’s body and not just the cremated remains that was in the grave. “When I go there, which isn’t often, I want to feel like her body is under ground, right alongside my grandparents and beloved great aunt, all dressed up in their Sunday best…”

Although creation is permitted, some Catholics have not been dealing properly with their loved ones remains. Common practices include scattering ashes, parting ashes out to friends and relatives, and keeping the ashes in a common area, such as a living room. While scattering ashes may seem romantic to some (but is also contrary to Catholic teaching), there’s something to be said about keeping your loved one in once place, and then marking that place with a name. “We mark the graves of our loved ones with a headstone to memorialize them, so we don’t forget them”. When visiting that person’s grave, just seeing his or her name can give comfort.

To instruct the faithful in this regard, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued updated guidelines. According to these, burial is still preferred, but cremation is an option. When a loved one has been cremated, their ashes must be kept intact, the same as one would treat a body. The ashes may not be separated or scattered. Instead, they should remain in a proper vessel that is interred in a proper place, such as a cemetery or church. Finally, the document stresses that Catholics who choose cremation for reasons contrary to the faith, (e.g., to have their ashes scattered) must be denied a Christian funeral.

In the end, whether cremation or burial is chosen, we await from the grave the second coming of Jesus Christ and the blessed Resurrection of the Dead.

Tips for talking to children about difficult subjects/news reports

The topic of sex abuse, particularly child sex abuse, is a daunting one for parents. Every parent must consider many factors including the best age-appropriate way to discuss the topic. Below are some points to consider adapted from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and First Things First.

1. Make sure you are composed before you talk with your child.
2. If you believe your child is aware of news concerning abuse in the diocese, start the conversation. Not talking about a difficult event can make the event even more threatening in your child’s mind.
3. Listen carefully to what your child is asking or talking about.
4. Clarify just what any concerns are before you answer. Sometimes we make assumptions and give far more information than what the child needs.
5. Keep your answers simple and brief. Don’t answer questions that have not been asked. Do not overload your child with information that is beyond his/her level of understanding.
6. Assure your child that you and other adults that are in charge are doing everything possible to make sure they will be safe. This will give them a sense that adults are actively taking steps to protect those who are currently suffering.
7. Don’t make guarantees that such a thing can never happen again. Words like “never” and “always” should be used very carefully because small children trust that this is a promise from you.
8. Explain that we do not know why people treat other people badly.
9. Try to limit your child’s exposure to media coverage. A child believes what he or she sees on television, or in the newspapers is always true.
10. Let your children know about successful community efforts. You may want to share positive media images, such as reports of individuals helping those in need.

Additional information is available at www.YouthProtectionHBG.com

FROM THE PASTOR’S DESK