Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Lord. Thank you for your dedicated and faithful service to the Lord, Holy Mother Church and the Diocese of Lincoln.

The Catholic Church in the United States has made great progress in recent years in its efforts to protect children from abuse and promote justice, healing, and reconciliation for those who have been harmed by persons in the service of the Church. Nevertheless, the evil of child abuse remains a tragic consequence of fallen human nature, and we must never allow our vigilance to wane. Pope Francis has written, "everything possible must be done to rid the Church of the scourge of the sexual abuse of minors and to open pathways of reconciliation and healing for those who are abused" (Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences and Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life Concerning the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, February 2, 2015).

Indeed, the work of child protection will never fully be completed. As the recently revised Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People reminds us, we must constantly "re-affirm our deep commitment to sustain and strengthen a safe environment within the Church for children and youth."

It is for that reason I hereby promulgate the revised Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Lincoln. They are effective May 2021. The policies include important updates reflecting Charter revisions and best practices in the evolving field of child abuse prevention. I encourage all personnel – particularly the leaders of our diocesan institutions - to carefully review these revised policies and implement them in the spirit of sustaining and strengthening the culture of child protection in our diocese.

May the words of our Lord be constantly on our minds and hearts, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Lk 18:16). With my gratitude for your collaboration and my prayerful good wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Rev. James D. Conley
Bishop of Lincoln

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