



IN THE



OCTOBER 2020

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE

OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

*Serving the Diocese of Lansing*

REBA SOMMER

SAFE ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR

517.342.2551

rsommer@dioceseoflansing.org

CHERYL WILLIAMSHECKSEL

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

888-308.6252

cwilliamshecksel@dioceseoflansing.org

With my first cup of coffee for the day, I sat down at 5:50AM to do my daily reading and prayer time. It's part of my morning routine and without a doubt, the most needed and best part of my day. Some mornings, I have the added bonus of Oliver, our indoor kitty sprawled across on my lap. And when I say sprawled, I mean it. Most mornings before I even get downstairs my mind tries to process as many thoughts as there are coffee grounds in my coffee pod. Well, that may be a bit of an exaggeration, but close. This morning my mind seemed to be full of anxious and doubt filled thoughts. As human nature would have it, I tried to take these thoughts on and quickly slay them all by myself. I wish I could remember when I get into this head and heart space to just be SILENT and LISTEN to that still small voice (did you know the words silent and listen have the exact same letters). I try to practice this but it's easy to forget.

I'm pretty sure our Lord was up way before me this morning because this is what he had prepared years ago for me to read this morning (in real time).

**"Wait quietly in My Presence while My thoughts form silently in the depths of your being. Do not try to rush this process, because hurry keeps your heart earthbound."**

He does this to me every time. Pray for me to be silent and listen. I will do the same for you.

### **kNOw PROGRAM**

It is my understanding that many of our parishes will not be meeting in person for Religious Education and our schools will not be gathering large crowds as we've done in the past. This has caused us to reexamine how we can present the kNOw Program. It is my hope to still provide some sort of Safe Environment training for students and parents this school year. As of this morning, I am still working on a way to provide you access to some sort of training. So in turn, you can provide access to your students and families. It may be several weeks before anything is ready and available. If you have the kNOw program planned into your year and you are planning on the normal live sessions with students and parents that is wonderful, please proceed. If you are uncertain as of this newsletter, you may want to consider adding this to your schedule after January 1 so you have additional options.

### **ORGANIZE, CLEAN UP AND 100% VIRTUS COMPLIANT**

For those in charge of the VIRTUS database, we are working our way across the Diocese in every parish and school to help you achieve 100%. There is no need to feel worried about us coming to you. We are coming to your location to help YOU, sit with YOU and work right along beside YOU. We will help you to understand what is needed for VIRTUS and the yearly audit, how to achieve it and how to manage it. You will feel a sense of relief. We are receiving very positive feedback in our journey. Some things on our audit have changed and this is a good time to help you understand what they are. We are adding parishes and schools to our schedule and if you would like to go through the training sooner than later, please let me know and I can add you to our schedule. We will be working with every parish and school.

### **LIVE PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN SLOWLY STARTING BACK**

A few VIRTUS Facilitators are beginning to ease back into holding LIVE VIRTUS - Protecting God's Children sessions again. Of course this comes with good social distancing. If you have staff in need of a live session please let me know, or continue to check

<https://www.dioceseoflansing.org/human-resources/protecting-gods-children-awareness-sessions>