

A State of Emergency has been declared in 17 West Virginia Counties.

Help support the long-term recovery efforts!

Efforts continue across the Mountain State after the severe flooding earlier this month. West Virginia encountered tornados, microbursts, strong winds, heavy rains, and mudslides. Several counties have experienced moderate-to-substantial flooding, notably along the Ohio River and its tributaries. All donations support the long-term humanitarian and recovery efforts of Catholic Charities West Virginia.

We thank you for supporting your neighbors across West Virginia in their time of need! You can go to <https://dwc.org> to donate.





CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

We are called through scripture and teaching to protect the life and dignity of the human person. Throughout the year, but especially in April, all are asked to increase awareness, educate ourselves and the community, and seek healing for those who have been so tragically impacted by this horror.

Child abuse comes in many forms. Most people identify child abuse as physically hitting a child. Neglect is also a form of abuse. Failing to provide a child with proper nutrition, housing and supervision can cause irreparable harm. Expectations that a child be an active participant in the care of home and family, or even age-appropriate jobs is a part of healthy development. But excessive demands can cross into a form of servitude that is beyond the societal norms. Child pornography is a form of sexual abuse, with real victims in every image. The viewing of these images is an offense against the human dignity.

Child abuse can occur in every culture and every socio-economic demographic. Peer-reviewed research, especially that of the past 30 years, repeatedly shows this to be true. This same research indicates that the vast majority of child abuse occurs at the hands of someone known to the victim. Those who seek to harm children will pursue opportunities that provide access to children and may even ingratiate themselves into the home. You can protect children by respecting the safe environment protocols established at youth-serving organizations. More importantly, you can implement many of these protocols in your home and be ever observant and vigilant in all public and private settings.

Hope is rising. Throughout scripture, there is evidence that we are called to be ambassadors of hope and healing. Did you know children of abuse long to hear this message of hope. Victims of crime, their families and loved ones need to know that their voices are heard. Organizations throughout the nation are striving to share the message that He has risen and that there is hope. Each of us has a unique ability to support individuals who are hurting, promote healthy relationships, and build communities that are safe from those who may want to do harm. How has He called you to be an ambassador of hope and healing?

The Catholic Church is deeply committed to protecting children from abuse and holding people accountable for inflicting such pain. In December 2021, the revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law went into effect. This is the most recent of several documents that specifically address the issue of the abuse of children. Bishops in the U.S. lead the way for these changes with the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People 20 years ago. Today every diocese and eparchy must have in place systems for tending to those who have been harmed, protecting those in our care and seeking restorative justice.