



Office of the Bishop

Safe Haven Sunday 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

This weekend we are again celebrating Safe Haven Sunday throughout our diocese. The goal is to raise awareness about the issue of pornography and how parents can help their children navigate the use of mobile devices, computers and social media. This effort was inspired by the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*. This is done in many dioceses in our country on dates chosen by each bishop.

Today's readings speak of God's unfailing love and mercy. They also speak about how important it is to respond to God's love and mercy.

Parents, you have a gift for your children. You can help communicate God's mercy and His desire for their good through their use of computers and mobile devices. Today, adults and children often have anonymous access to content that is not only graphic, but frequently violent and perverse. Many forms of social media were designed in a way that gives predators and other bad actors easy access to users. Without your involvement, your children are likely to be impacted in ways that harm their human dignity and, with growing frequency, even their safety. When parents bring light, truth, and mercy to their children they can find a way forward to mature and safe use of technology. As your bishop I want to help equip you for this daunting task.

Our Diocesan Vision, *One Family: Restored in Christ – Equipped for Mission* calls us all to be equipped for our mission to make disciples. To this end, I invite you to use a free seven-day text-to-join program that provides practical guidance to create safer digital environments. We have partnered with Covenant Eyes to provide this free educational program and a free month of access to their monitoring and blocking software. On the prayer cards for Safe Haven Sunday, you will find the text-to-join information for the Safe Kids program, a QR code for the free e-book ***Connected: How Strong Families Lead to Internet Safe Kids***, and the website for our local support programs. If you have a smartphone, I give you permission... no, I ask you, right here in church, to send the sign-up text... right now. You simply text "SAFEKIDS" (as one word, with no space between safe and kids) to 66866.

I invite you to consider using monitoring and blocking software like Covenant Eyes, Bark, and other similar options. Learn the facts about the dangers, make a plan, pray, and make your plan a reality for the sake of your children and their future.

Our children are precious gifts from God. Thank you for all you do to raise them as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph at The Catholic Center

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