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## THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

May 17, 2019

Dear People of God:

May the Peace of Christ be with you!

In 1990, the Catholic Diocese of Belleville issued its first written Child Protection Policy, which was most recently revised in July 2003. Over the last several months and years, we have carefully considered possible updates and clarifications. I am now pleased to release the attached revised Child Protection Policy, which updates the policies and procedures we follow to do all we can to protect our children from abuse. This revised Policy is posted on our website at this link: <https://www.diobelle.org/cp-articles/274-child-protection-policy>.

Sadly, the history of the Diocese of Belleville is blemished by the criminal and immoral actions of some of our clergy. This resulted in their permanent removal from ministry after we learned of credible allegations that they had abused minors. We all recognize the grave harm caused by these immoral deeds and express again our regret and sorrow for the suffering they have caused.

Over the years, the Catholic Church has become more knowledgeable of this great moral crisis. We have worked hard to respond quickly and effectively to allegations of childhood sexual abuse. The revised Policy represents our current best effort to establish policies and procedures to protect our children. The only way to ensure that no child is ever again abused by a member of our clergy is for every ordained minister in the Church to nurture a Christ-centered moral life that respects the dignity and value of every human person.

This Policy will be updated, if necessary, due to changing circumstances, deeper knowledge, guidance from His Holiness, Pope Francis, and decisions by our Episcopal Conference.

I ask that you join me in continuing to pray for everyone whose lives have been harmed in any way by the greatest crisis in the history of the Catholic Church in this country.

Prayerfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward K. Braxton".

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.  
Bishop of Belleville

### Office of the Bishop

222 South Third · Belleville Illinois 62220-1985  
Phone (618) 277-8181 Ext. 106 · Fax (618) 277-0387  
E-mail: [ebraxton@diobelle.org](mailto:ebraxton@diobelle.org)