

March 23, 2015

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences, Your Graces, and Reverend Fathers,

Christ is in our midst!

As you know, the PSPs require of all persons working with children in the church to receive training on the prevention of sexual abuse (PSP 14.01). These individuals would include:

Clergy (Bishops, priests and deacons)
Church school teachers
Camp counselors
Youth leaders/advisors/mentors

Last year, after extensive research, ORSMA selected an excellent training tool developed by the organization Darkness to Light. The prevention training program, Stewards of Children, meets the requirements as set forth in the PSPs. We understand that some dioceses have been using other programs (eg. Boy Scouts of America) to train their youth workers.

While the Stewards of Children training is not the only option required, the OCA strongly recommends that **all** parishes adopt this program. It is evidence-based and has been endorsed by the US Department of Justice. A unified approach to this very sensitive issue will help us prevent abuse in our parishes.

To improve access to this program, the OCA will pay for **all** participants to take the online training this year (saving each person \$10). Additionally, the ORSMA Coordinator, Cindy Heise, has become a certified facilitator for the Stewards of Children prevention training. Cindy is available to deliver the training in person for groups up to 30 individuals, free of charge (travel and accommodation expenses will be shared between the OCA, diocese, and parish).



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We request that you inform all parish rectors that this is available to them. If they and/or their youth workers would like to take the training, either online or in person, please have them contact Cindy by phone (516-922-0931) or email (cheise@oca.org).

Additionally, Cindy will be giving the training at the All-American Council in Atlanta on July 22 and 23. For those interested in attending, seating is limited to 40 per session, so please have participants sign up online at: <http://18aac.oca.org/registration/> When completing the registration process, participants should select “Protecting Our Youth” (given by Cindy Heise and Bernard Wilson).

We thank you for your leadership in helping to prevent sexual abuse in the Church.

Asking your blessings and prayers,

Cindy Heise, LMSW
ORSMA