



THE DIOCESE OF YAKIMA • PASTORAL OFFICE  
LA DIÓCESIS DE YAKIMA • CENTRO PASTORAL

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February 27, 2013

Dear Friends:

Again, thanks so much for your energy and time during this last Friday's follow up and review of our policies on construction, finance and construction policies. Here are some PowerPoint presentations that I hope might help you in working with your leadership.

First off, I mentioned during the day that I will begin a parish visitation process to review how each parish is doing in moving towards those five standards of parish and school excellence. I've been explaining each of them one at a time on a weekly basis. If you'd like to read them, your parish priest can forward you those e-mails. So can anyone in my office. See below to view this PowerPoint.

Second, much discussion was generated about the criminal background checks through our independent firm CICS as well as the Washington State Patrol. We're passing the information on to Monsignor Siler, who was away for this day, that some of you suggest a special edition of the Central Washington Catholic dedicated to this issue so folks could really be informed. See below to view this PowerPoint. Please note also that the background check process outlined in the policies is undergoing revision based on the feedback we have received. However, it is important for you to see to it that all employees, and all volunteers who have ongoing, unsupervised contact with children or youth, have up-to-date background checks completed no later than June 30, 2013. I will have some further suggestions below.

Third, we carefully reviewed the flow chart and the policies on construction as well as finance. To view the construction and finance policies see below. To view the construction flow chart see below.

Fourth, remember that July 1 is the start date – not today. And July 1 is the "starting point" and not the "ending point." By July 1 you will want to have a plan of how you will move your local parish with its many volunteers who may not all speak the same language into compliance with our policies. That plan may take a while to implement. Here are my cautions as you move forward.

**DO NOT START WITH THE FORMS.** If you start by putting a background check form in front of a volunteer they will feel hurt and not trusted. You need to start with your parish leadership as well as a gathering of your key parish volunteers. Treat them nice. Bring them a lunch. Have a little gathering. Walk them through the PowerPoints (which can also be handouts – call us if you don't know how to create handouts from PowerPoints) and then let them ask questions. If you don't know the answer, tell them that you'll get back to them. Give us a call. But your parishioners should not be learning about the policies for the first time when you put a form in front of them. I am in the process of preparing a cover letter, in English and Spanish, that can go with the safe environment packet of policies that was sent to the pastors in January. This letter will affirm our employees and volunteers in the important work they do for the church, particularly in keeping children and youth safe.

**EDUCATE AS MANY LEADERS AS POSSIBLE.** We are providing you with PowerPoints so you can do what we did for you. You can walk people through the Diocesan policies and let them

ask questions and raise concerns. Their questions and concerns can help you aim your parish plan. It can also help us in our own web support for this process. While everyone is certainly welcome to learn about this in your parish, you really don't need to burden people with this on a Sunday morning. Rather figure out who needs to know and ask them to bring people along that they think should know. Utilize the informal network in your parish. You already know who talks with whom. Utilize your key leaders in pushing out the information.

**SENSITIVITY TO UNDOCUMENTED:** Several participants mentioned the great fear of our parishioners without documents about filling out any kind of form. Again, I am preparing a cover letter, in both English and Spanish, that you can use when speaking with your employees and volunteers about the importance of the work we do to help keep children and youth safe. The letter will affirm that their personal information is not shared with law enforcement either by us or by the agencies we use to conduct background checks. If you need help explaining this in Spanish, you may wish to call Diana Aparicio.

**CREATE A TIMELINE,** based on your parish education process with key leaders. It make take your parish a number of months before you find yourselves fully able to implement the policies regarding background checks on volunteers, tamper proof bags, two independent counters, etc. You'll want to create a ticker of items that you currently do and a ticker of items that you'll need to do in the future. You'll want to put those items on a time line. July 1st is the start date. It's not the end date. It may take you and your parish a while to make these policies fully operational.

**SEND US YOUR PLAN.** If you are not fully operational by July 1st then kindly send us your plan including your timelines for education and implementation. Even your plan provides evidence that we are all working to comply fully with both Safe Environment policies as well as exercising good stewardship in what is – in effect – an insurance cooperative among the dioceses who are insured through Catholic Mutual. That plan should be sent to Jim Perko who will keep me posted.

**EVALUATE YOUR PROGRESS.** As you implement ask your leaders how it is going. This is not an invitation for people to gripe and complain. Rather this is a time to see how you can implement better, communicate better and affirm the progress that's being made.

In implementing the safe environment as well as the finance and construction policies we are trying to build on your local community. However, when it comes to diocesan decisions about loans, construction and finance, those will begin on July 1 since you have had from February to July to educate your own folks about the funding requirements for parish projects requiring diocesan approval.

Again, I am keenly aware how steep a climb some of these policies may seem. I personally had to implement many of these kinds of changes when I was a pastor but I realize that these procedures that flow from the new policies are new for you. Please know of my appreciation and gratitude for all you do and all who you are.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ to be carried out in our parishes does require our work and our diligence precisely because everything we touch and everyone we touch is a gift and we are mere stewards. Thanks for improving the quality of our stewardship.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph J. Tyson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson  
Bishop of Yakima

[Signature electronically applied]