THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

The Right Reverend James R. Mathes
Bishop

January 20, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The ministry to which we are called, is a ministry of trust and faithful commitment to providing a safe place for all who come to the doors of our churches and to the ministries we offer in each of our communities. *Safeguarding God's People* is the title we use to describe the body of work contained in this manual. The purpose of this manual is to provide policies and procedures for the prevention and response to sexual abuse and misconduct.

"Those who serve the church, whether as clergy or lay workers, paid or unpaid, maintain a powerful relationship and authority and trust with the people whom they minister. Betrayal of that trust through violation of sexual boundaries, causes great emotional and spiritual harm. Such misconduct is a denial of our identity as Christians. We must take every step to prevent it, and to respond with swift justice when misconduct does occur." (*Diocese of Virginia, Policy Manual on Sexual Abuse and Misconduct: Prevention and Response)*

It is my hope and expectation that you will take seriously your responsibility to use the important information and policies in this manual in ways that will create safe and sacred space in your church. It is my prayer that your good work and attention to those efforts will mean that we will not have to face the difficult situations of sexual misconduct in our Diocese.

I am grateful to those who have labored to provide this manual. I believe it will guide us to be a healthier place for our ministry filled with hope, meaning and purpose.

+James R. Mathes

Faithfully,
The Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes