



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1311 BYRON STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 230
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

October 15, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In St. Matthew's Gospel (19-14), Jesus tells his disciples: *Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.* Scandals in society and the Church, going back many years, have taught us how important it is to take the Lord's words to heart. That is why our Diocese has a comprehensive program to protect children and young people in our parishes, schools and camps, including strong background checks, fingerprinting for clergy, teachers and youth ministers and enhanced reporting procedures.

But this is not all we must do. We must seek God's help and the intercession of His saints in order to protect our children and young people from threats to their moral and spiritual development.

This summer a young college student of our Diocese approached me to speak of his desire to form a Confraternity of St. Nicholas, who is the patron saint of children. I loved the fact that this proposal came from one of our young people! After some consultation, I approved the formation of the Confraternity in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Members of the Confraternity will seek St. Nicholas' intercession for the protection of all youth from sexual abuse, human trafficking, pornography, and scandal. They will do so by prayer, fasting and good works.

I encourage you to learn more about the Confraternity of St. Nicholas and to promote it. Enclosed are flyers to place in your church vestibule or gathering places for those who are interested. I ask our priests to invite your parishioners to visit the Confraternity's website: <https://dwc.org/evangelization-and-catechesis/confraternity-of-st-nicholas/>. There you can register to become a member of this new Confraternity.

As Bishop St. Nicholas defended Christ's divinity against those who denied it, we implore his prayers to defend children and young people from all attacks on their moral and spiritual well-being. Joining the Confraternity of St. Nicholas is a providential way to participate in the prayers offered to this saint for that purpose.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston