

October 19, 2020

Dear Parents,

As parents of children in fifth grade, you know first-hand the challenges they face in with regard to healthy development in many areas of Christian life, especially the virtue of chastity. As your Bishop, I am keenly aware of my responsibility to find ways to support your essential role in raising your children in the knowledge and practice of the faith.

I am pleased to endorse fully the Chastity Education Program implemented in all our elementary Catholic Schools. This program supports critical work that you do at home in teaching your child to live a life of virtue. With lessons for fifth through eighth grades and a parent component, we are building a partnership between school and home to teach the beauty of human sexuality and chastity. Because you know your child best, the intimate details of human sexuality will be reserved for you to teach at home. I encourage you to rely on God's grace to assist you in taking on this role as primary educator. I also encourage you to attend the parent meeting that your school offers.

A packet of materials has been prepared to help you start those critical conversations that need to take place at home. Our support will continue in the form of lessons taught during Religion class for one to two weeks, depending on the grade level. We will also offer the opportunity for the fifth graders to attend a class on the topic of dealing with the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty. If you, as a parent, do not want your child to attend this class the school will respect your wishes. As you continue this journey with your child in the years after fifth grade, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Chastity Education for additional resources to answer our culture's ever-changing questions and challenges.

Know that my prayers and God's grace will be with you as you strive to be the first and most important educators of your children. With every best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie

LTP/kw