

Alignment of *Creating Safe and Sacred Places* with Catholic Theological Teachings

Creating Safe and Sacred Places emphasizes themes that are rooted in the Catholic theological tradition:

Dignity of the Human Person

- We are each created in the image of God
- Therefore, essentially sacred, and social (Genesis 1 + 2)
- Body of Christ Imagery—Pauline—We are all one Body. When one part of the Body is harmed, we all are harmed. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Covenant Community

- Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit
- Responsibility for the Least Among Us
- “Churches are intended to be communities of faith where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are honored and respected, where each person is a child of God and should be held safely in God’s care. When abused by a priest, a victim’s inherent worth and dignity are disregarded and violated, and the foundations of religious faith are betrayed.” (CSSP p.42)
- Harm against these little ones is a crime against God and God’s commands

Moral Code of the Covenant Community (Moses)

Decalogue- Sixth commandment [clearly state that it is the perpetrator, the abuser who is violating this commandment]

Transgressions in question relate to obligations arising from divine commands regarding human sexual interaction as conveyed by the 6th commandment of the Decalogue. Thus the norm to be considered in assessing an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is whether conduct or interaction with a minor qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation of the sixth commandment (USCCB, Canonical depicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State, 1995, p.6.)

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Includes the elements of

- truthful confession,
- heartfelt contrition, and
- a firm purpose of amendment

Forgiveness includes accountability and justice. Forgiveness is always a process in the victim’s terms.

Communal Implications of Reconciliation

“Genuine reconciliation heals and brings us together to address this issue in a way that will insure that it will not happen again; that begins with the love of the Truth that is Jesus Christ; one that embraces fully and honestly the authentic elements of the Sacrament of Penance as we celebrate it in the Catholic Tradition. Only by truthful

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confession, heartfelt contrition, and a firm purpose of amendment can we hope to receive the generous mercy of God and the forgiveness of our brothers and sisters.” (CSSP p.40 from “A Catholic Response to Sexual Abuse: Confession, Contrition, Resolve.”)

If “creating safe and sacred places” is the goal (and it is), then we need to understand: *Key Distinctions create Awareness, which leads to Knowledge, which leads to Prevention, which is the key to Safety, which is sacred. And Sacredness is a creative labor, which leads to Creating Safe and Sacred Places.*

Developmental Progression of *Creating Safe and Sacred Places*

Creating Safe and Sacred Places is divided into two parts. Part A includes in-depth discussion about sexual abuse, sexual offenders, signs of abuse and sexual abuse and the Church. Part A is important foundational information for all adults implementing the program.

Part B of *Creating Safe and Sacred Places* contains the training and lesson plans for the sessions for young people, ministry leaders and parents. Each session incorporates prayer, education, open discussion of sexual abuse and action in response to the topic.

Grades 9 & 10

Themes:

The Lessons for Grades 9 & 10 include identifying risk factors associated with sexual abuse, developing a personal response plan and information and tools for self-protection.

Grades 11 & 12

Themes:

The Lessons for Grades 11 & 12 include encouraging healthy and safe ways to adulthood, awareness of tools, resources, and guidance to create safe and sacred communities, the importance of preventing sexual abuse, and identifying ways to be role models for younger children.

The manual also contains an intergenerational model for these lessons.