

# Church of St. William the Abbot

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Spring 2004

Dear Parish Minister/Volunteer:

As you are aware, an issue that has certainly challenged our Church over these recent days has been the way that our Church can safeguard our most precious gift—the children who have been entrusted to our care. Several years ago, the Diocese of Rockville Centre implemented a “Volunteer Registration Form,” that each minister/volunteer has been required to fill out. If one’s ministry involves working with children or “at-risk” populations (e.g., the frail elderly) or involves transporting people in one’s car, additional forms have also been required.

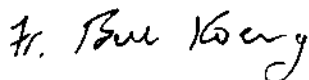
Over this past year, we as a parish, under the direction of the Diocese, have been implementing **another safeguard** for our children: a **Volunteer Code of Conduct** and **Background Screening**. The Volunteer Code of Conduct is rather self-explanatory and does not warrant further comment. In regard to the Background screening, please know that the employees and staff of the parish (myself included) have gone through this process. The process is relatively simple: giving permission for the US Investigations Services (USIS) company (a non-profit company that was spun off from the United States Government) to do a background screening check. This background check includes information as to criminal history, valid social security number and/or registration on any state’s sex abuse registry. The process whereby this is done is rather simple. The volunteer signs a release form with his/her address and social security number. This information is **sent directly** from the rectory office to USIS. They do a check of the public records on the individual. If there is any criminal history, the Diocesan Office for the Protection of Children is notified. This Office then notifies the Pastor and a determination is made whether or not it is appropriate for this person to volunteer in this ministry/activity.

The goal of this effort, as well as the volunteer registration forms that have been in use since the year 2000, is to create a **safe environment** for our children. Some people may question why, if they have been volunteering for 20 years or more, they have to go through this. And the reason is simple: it would not be fair to ask people who are less well-known to us to do this and not other people. If we are going to **ask anyone** to do this, we have to **ask everyone** to do this.

I would ask that you complete the Code of Conduct form as well as the Background Screening Form and return it to me at the Rectory. If you have not completed the Volunteer Registration Form that was required as of the year 2000, I would ask that you also return this form to me. The forms are available at the rectory or on the Parish Web Site at [www.stwilliam.org](http://www.stwilliam.org). As of **August 31, 2004**, everyone who ministers/volunteers in the parish, will be required to have these forms filled out.

While I know that people will have various feelings regarding this request, I would ask that you **please understand** that this is for the good and safety of our children. In the meantime, should any questions arise please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,



Reverend William E. Koenig  
Pastor