

## Holy Family

**Bishop James Johnston will make his first visit to St. Anthony's on Monday night, January 11. Our diocese is offering a series of prayer services for those who seek healing, especially survivors of abuse, especially survivors of sexual abuse by clergy. We will be the first parish to offer a service in Spanish, and our new bishop wants to preside. This service is open to all those who seek healing in any way - survivors, relatives, friends, anyone who feels damaged by the existence of abuse, or anyone who wants to support those who seek healing.**

**In my limited experience, the clergy sex abuse crisis has been more evident in the anglo community than in the hispanic community. It could be that some clergy abuse has gone unreported because of cultural differences such as machismo, shame, and the respect that many hispanics have for priests.**

**The evidence for domestic violence is easier to obtain. A survey of families from Texas, for example, reveals these results about hispanic family life: the number of hispanics who report being severely abused in their lifetime: 36%; women who report being forced to have sex against their will: 20%; hispanics who reported experiencing at least one form of domestic violence and took no action: 40%; those who believe that it is never appropriate to stay in an abusive relationship: 82%; those who acknowledge that leaving an abusive relationship can be more dangerous than staying: 46%; hispanics who agree that a husband who abuses his wife is more likely also to abuse his children: 83%; yet only 47% believe that domestic violence passes from generation to generation. These results were collated in Texas, but they probably apply to other States.**

**Domestic violence is disheartening, but it will never overshadow the great good that families accomplish. Families provide love and nourishment. They endorse education and good health. They promote reconciliation and peace. On the first Christmas Day, Jesus, the Son of God, was born into a human family so good we call them the Holy Family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph still inspire families across the world and every generation. They led a perfect family life, but every family can share in their virtues because every human being is a child of God.**

**The first letter of St. John says that we are children of God. That is our privilege. And this is our duty: John says, "We should believe in the name of [God's] Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us."**

**Sometimes we don't love as we should. Sometimes we are guilty of sin, and we need forgiveness. Other times we are survivors of someone else's sin, and we need healing, not forgiveness. Some victims of abuse wrongly feel that they are responsible. But no sin committed against you is your sin. Abuse should be reported. When the offense is made public, healing can begin.**

**Our diocesan office of child and youth protection welcomes everyone to the service that Bishop Johnston will lead here. Even if you do not know Spanish well, your support will be meaningful, and you can meet the English-speakers from the diocesan office. If you prefer to participate in an English-language service, those events are posted on our bulletin board by the front doors. We pray that the family of the church and families in the church may love one another as Christ commanded us. May they all be healed.**