

Diocesan Safeguarding Day, 2020

Letter from Archbishop Martin

Sunday 27 September is Diocesan Safeguarding Day. As your Archbishop, I have made the safety and protection from abuse of the children and vulnerable members of Archdiocese a particular priority. It has been a challenge to all of us to face up to our responsibility to make reparation for the failures of the past. This year we face a different set of challenges and we do so in a situation of considerable uncertainty.

Given our uncertain financial future, we will have to learn to use our declining resources sparingly and wisely. You will be aware that it has been necessary to reduce the number employed by the Diocese including a number of people employed in the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service. However, our commitment to safeguarding and to support of victim/ survivors of abuse remains undiminished. We need to consider the implications of working with less and the opportunities this presents to look at how we share what we have. As parishes learn to work closely together, good safeguarding practice can be passed from one parish to another, for example, without always having to rely on CSPS.

Given the uncertainty surrounding bringing people together, we will have to consider how best we approach things like delivering safeguarding training. Information technology presents us with new opportunities, while also presenting challenges for those not used to using computers.

There is a third uncertainty which I wish to address. I cannot say for how much longer I will serve as your Archbishop. As I near the end of my time with you, I want to say a particular thank you for all of the work you have been doing to make the Church in Dublin a safer place for children and for vulnerable adults. Our parish clergy, already under pressure due to declining numbers, have had to accept additional responsibilities in this area, such as ensuring that those involved in public ministry are vetted. I wish to thank them all for this. I wish to thank also the hundreds of parish safeguarding representatives and the thousands who have attended safeguarding training. I wish to thank all of our parishioners who have kept faith with us through this difficult time. I wish also to acknowledge the courage of those who have spoken of their experiences of abuse in the Church. Their stories have been difficult for us to hear but they have helped us to face up to the truth and we must honour their contribution by making our parishes not just safe places but also welcoming and nurturing places for all children and vulnerable persons.

I ask you also to remember those who were abused and to pray for them

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Diarmuid Martin .', with a stylized flourish at the end.

+ Diarmuid Martin
Archbishop of Dublin