

This is the very first designated Safeguarding Sunday in our diocese. It marks years of dedication and work by so many to ensure that the diocese is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults and for all those working with them. I thank the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee for proposing this day and making it happen.

There are close to 200 people voluntarily working on behalf of safeguarding across all our parishes. I am most grateful for their commitment and dedication to their safeguarding brief. It is greatly appreciated. Our parishes, our diocese are safe places for young people to participate fully in the life of the Church.

Nothing gives me greater joy than to witness the involvement of so many young people in the life of our diocese –

- on my visits to parishes meeting teams of Altar Servers,
- the 450 John Paul II recipients at our ceremonies this November,
- the 260 Meitheal leaders working across 26 secondary schools in the diocese,
- the 130 young people who travelled with us on our pilgrimage to Lourdes.

All these young people are a credit to their families, their parishes and their schools. I thank the many priests who work so hard to ensure young people's experience of Church is both positive and healthy.

Abuse of position or of power must never be condoned. For those who have experienced abuse of any kind in the diocese, those who had their innocence violated and their trust in Church completely shattered, I am truly sorry. I once again reiterate our commitment as a diocese to apply best practice of safeguarding in every aspect of diocesan life.

On this our first Safeguarding Sunday in Kildare & Leighlin, I thank those who have told their story of abuse. We must do all we can to allow these stories to be heard. Structures we have put in place over recent years are there to ensure this, structures that will help rebuild trust that was lost. Thank you all for your part in making this Sunday such a significant one in the life of our diocese.

*+Denis Nulty Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin*