

Safeguarding Message for Safeguarding Sunday 2020

The place of young people in the heart of our diocese, our parishes, our church

- 13 September 2020

Last September we celebrated our very first Safeguarding Sunday in the diocese. This year to coincide with Safeguarding Sunday in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic we are also offering a Video Message.

Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity to recognise publicly the years of dedication and work by so many to ensure that our 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 once again 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.

The theme of this year's Safeguarding Sunday is the place of young people in the heart of our diocese, our parishes, our 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 John Paul II recipients
- the 260 Meitheal leaders working across 26 secondary schools in the diocese
- the young people who travel with us on our pilgrimages

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

We in Kildare & Leighlin diocese are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and young people and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this.

We recognise each child, each young person as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of them in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All our priests, religious, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

The participation of children and young people in the heart of our parishes, our diocese, our church is a source of enjoyment, growth in faith, support and enrichment for young people and the wider communities in our parishes, participation that grows year on year.

We are all enriched by the presence and participation of children/young people; it is an expression of the Christian Community

We all share the responsibility of making the Church a safe place for children/young people to be - Church personnel, parents and parishioners. We put certain requirements in place to enable this to happen but we also live safeguarding every time we are in contact with youngsters in our parish activities.

I once again commend this Safeguarding Sunday Initiative and reiterate my apology to anyone who has suffered abuse in the past. You are always very much in our prayers. A reminder that the services of Towards Healing and Towards Peace are available for all who are trying to deal with the trauma of abuse in their lives.

With my prayers & thoughts,

✠ Denis Nulty
Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin