



Missionary Society of St. Columban

Dalgan Park, Navan, Co Meath



Safeguarding Newsletter, Region of Ireland

Issue 5: June 2020

Welcome.

Welcome everyone to our annual newsletter, even though we are living in strange times where we are all adapting to a 'new normal' we still need to remind ourselves of the importance of safeguarding all. Our safeguarding committee met through video conference in May (another adaptation) and we discussed the parallels between our reaction and response to safeguarding and now to the Covid-19 virus.

Coronavirus
COVID-19

At first we didn't believe that the virus would affect us here in Ireland. Similar thoughts surrounded child abuse it was happening somewhere else. Not in our homes, villages, churches etc. Then when we heard in early March of the first virus case, there was still a sense that we might be alright. Didn't we have all the knowledge, skills etc. A sense of disbelief as there was when we first started to hear of child abuse within the Church.

Then of course comes the advice, recommendations and later restrictions which we are all requested to abide by for the safety and wellness of not only ourselves but for everyone and especially those categorised as vulnerable. The statement been bandied is: "we are in this together". We have to embrace this new way of living; physical distancing (we all now know what a two meter distance is, did we know this prior to the virus?), hand washing, respiratory etiquette etc. We have a lot of questions. There can even be resistance. We could be driven to ask will this work?

When we on the committee reflected on the implementation of the various policies and procedures for safeguarding similar questioning, resistance and failure by some to cooperate were experienced. How many times have we heard the complaints: Why do we have to fill all these documents? Why do I need Garda vetting? Why should I sign the book in the sacristy etc.etc.? This too had to become the new normal to ensure that all are safeguarded especially the young and vulnerable.

We are also conscious that during this time of the restrictions as a result of the virus there are many children/vulnerable persons at risk because of the potential to be harmed. Sadly they do not have the support systems in place i.e. school, support groups, access to counsellors etc. during the lockdown.

Abuse of children has not gone away, and the reality of abuse for some children is increased during this period where they are largely invisible. We know well that most children are abused by people they know, family members, relatives, neighbours and other trusted adults. It is therefore important that Church ministry considers the wellbeing of children at what is probably a frightening time for them. NBSCCCI (National Board for Safeguarding Children Catholic Church Ireland May 2020 Newsletter).

The Safeguarding Committee will continue to support the implementation of safeguarding practices throughout our Region.

Safeguarding Committee
Region of Ireland

Pope Francis, Apostolic letter – Motu Proprio on the protection of minors and vulnerable persons (March 26th 2019).

The protection of minors and vulnerable persons is an integral part of the Gospel message that the Church and all its members are called to proclaim throughout the world. Christ himself, in fact, has entrusted us with the care and protection of the weakest and defenceless; whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me. (Mt 18: 5)



Vos Estis Lux Mundi 2019

On May 7th 2019, Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter, entitled “Vos Estis lux mundi, (*You are the light of the world*). This letter came from the Pope on his own initiative and not in response to any particular request, hence, it is known as *Motu Proprio*.

The structure of the document is broken into the following:

- a. **An introduction** which focuses on all crimes of a sexual nature committed within the Church by clergy and religious and the devastating consequences for those who suffered the abuse and for

the wider faithful community and the responsibility of Bishops, and other ministers of the Church.

- b. Title 1 (Articles 1-5).** The first few Articles details the general provision of the law, clarifying the type of behaviours which constitute the crime and indicating how reports are to be received and dealt with and introduces a new offence of trying to interfere with or avoid investigation of allegations. This section also introduces a very helpful definition of a “vulnerable adult” into Canon Law.
- c. Title 11 (Article 6-19).** This section details the procedures to be followed and the actions to be taken when the person, at the centre of a report is a Bishop or someone considered to have the same responsibility in Canon law to that of a Bishop.

In the *Motu Proprio*, Pope Francis highlights that a principal responsibility of all ecclesiastical authorities is the appropriate care of those who have been harmed in anyway by the behaviours detailed in Article 1.

For further information, please see:

- www.safeguarding.ie GAP Paper No. 6, *Shedding Light on Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, February, 2020.
- <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-05/pope-francis-motu-proprio-sex-abuse-clergy-religious-church.html>
- *Vos Estis lux Mundi: A Canonist reads the Motu Proprio of Pope Francis*, Fr Aidan McGrath, ofm, March 2020.

Garda Vetting

If you would like to renew your vetting or have any queries about your vetting please contact Sandra Neville:
Email: sandra.neville@columban.ie

Access Northern Ireland

If you wish to minister in Northern Ireland (not once off) please contact:

Andy Thomson,
Vetting and Barring Coordinator
for the Northern Dioceses
Email: Andy.thomson@soddc.org



Healing within a Church Context:

We believe as Christians in the healing power of God's Word and the Sacraments, or to be more explicit, in the healing power of Jesus. If an abused person is to attain some kind of wholeness, viz. to be a healed personality, the dimension of Christian care and love cannot be neglected. Carl Rogers maintained that it was the unconditional regard of the counsellor for his or her client that was the main healing dimension. Any effective minister of religion in the area of abuse has to have the gift of empathy to an extraordinary degree, to give the abused person a reason again to live a full and whole life. Caryll Houselander, who had no training as a counsellor, was often used by doctors, because of her gift of loving the broken individual into life. In so far as we make Jesus present to people, thus far we heal.

Safeguarding Prayer

Lord Jesus,

We thank you for calling us for the service of others.

We pray for a generosity of spirit to ensure children are protected.

We pray for a compassionate heart so that we can reach out to those who are wounded by abuse.

We pray for courage and determination as we seek the safety of everyone in our parishes. We pray that you will help us to do your will at all times and in all places.

Amen.



If you have a safeguarding concern please contact: **Sandra Neville**, Designated Liaison Person, Email: sandra.neville@columban.ie or Mobile: 087 9844779
Or you can report your concern directly to: An Garda Síochána Helpline, Tel: 1800 555 222, and, TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) Tel: 045 920000