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Diocese of Dunkeld

Annual Safeguarding Statement

October 2021

In July 2021, the Bishops of Scotland unanimously ratified the final text of 'In God's Image version 2' (**IGI v2**). It came into effect on 8th September and provides each Diocese an "Instruction on Safeguarding for implementation in all Catholic canonical jurisdictions in Scotland and by all other groups and organisations in Scotland subject to a legitimate canonical authority of the Catholic Church".

IGI v2 was published following a period of consultation, reflection and discussion among many who have direct experience and expertise in the front line of the Church's safeguarding practice. Significantly, this experience includes responding to the hurt and anguish of those who have suffered abuse at the hands of clergy, religious and others working within the Catholic Church.

IGI v2 makes reference to key statements made by Pope Francis and to instructions and norms published by the Holy See in recent years. The document also takes into account evolving changes to best practice in Safeguarding in Scotland and beyond.

Within our Diocese, we continue to strive to uphold the highest standards in our Safeguarding practice. In particular, we have added experience in Social Work, Education and Law to our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group and we are already seeing the benefits of this experience. In addition to this, we have also taken the significant step of appointing an independent Chair of the Advisory Group as well as our Risk Management Team. This change allows for a scrutiny of our practice and processes that have never been in place before.

As a diocese, we seek to uphold the highest safeguarding standards in our relationships with people of all ages who are involved in whatever capacity within the Church and its organisations. As with last year, our parish communities have been severely affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. We are aware that many of our volunteers throughout the Diocese have continued to provide support where possible within our parishes. The task of reopening our churches and their activities is a significant one, and on that our safeguarding efforts should be at the forefront of.

Throughout our Parish Communities, we welcome and fully appreciate the contributions made by all those who volunteer and offer their time, expertise, and skills. Within our

Diocese, we accept that it is the responsibility of all of us to work together to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or harm.

As ever, a significant part of our commitment to Safeguarding, is our duty to remember those who have been harmed or abused either by a member of the Church, by members of their family or by any other person. We ask that you continue to keep in your prayers all survivors of abuse as we pray for their healing and comfort.

The year ahead will no doubt present new challenges. In February 2022, the Diocese' Safeguarding procedures will be audited by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). SCIE have been tasked the Independent Review Group to assess each diocese in Scotland's efforts to implement the recommendations of the McClellan Commission. This audit is designed to measure compliance with the safeguarding standards set out in 'In God's Image'.

The results of this audit will provide the Diocese with a clear view of how effectively we are embracing a culture of safeguarding which respects, protects and nurtures the dignity of all people, keeps them safe and is compliant with legislation.

Nationally, the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, has announced the establishment of a new independent Safeguarding body – the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA).

The SCSSA will operate entirely independently of the Church and will have its own staff and Board of Management who will work in close collaboration with dioceses and religious communities to ensure that they are able to meet national safeguarding standards.

Part of the agencies remit will be to develop a process that will provide an independent review of complaints about safeguarding practice and crucially, establish a forum in which those who have experienced abuse can contribute their own perspectives to the development of safeguarding.

The task of Safeguarding within our parishes, remains a vital element of our Diocese commitment to caring for each other and for others. On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group and with each priest of the Diocese, we remain grateful for all the hard work done by our Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators and our parish volunteers. The dedication and motivation of the people in our parishes, continues to raise awareness of Safeguarding and highlights our shared responsibility in delivering a duty of care to all who engage with our parish community.



+Stephen Robson
Bishop of Dunkeld
On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group