



NEWSLETTER

INFORMATION MORNING 12 JUNE 2015

The Diocese hosted an information morning in June and invited guests and media representatives to hear a report on safeguarding activity in the Diocese for the previous year.

Archbishop Martin addressed the meeting on the lessons from the past, where we are now and where we are going in the Church with regard to child safeguarding and protection.

Archbishop Martin said:

From the past, we have learned that for many years Church leaders thought they knew how best to deal with child abuse by clergy and they had locked themselves into complacency; it took years then to get norms in place; it took years even to get the information that was in our files into shape; it took years to put into place the action which we knew was necessary; it took years to learn that survivors were not people out to challenge the Church; survivors and their families had simply got things right.

Where are we now? The culture of safeguarding is being imbedded within the Church and great credit is due to the many lay men and women who offer their service willingly and voluntarily, working with their priests, to ensure that this is so and remains so. There is a long way to go. Paradoxically, the good things that have been achieved could become a temptation towards complacency. There is a tendency for people to feel that the child abuse challenge has been addressed and we

can let our protective fences down. There is a tendency among some to say that the Church over-reacted, perhaps understandably, but now we can get back to a regime that is somehow less robust. It would be foolish to think that all our structures have fully satisfactory safeguarding procedures in place. There is no room for complacency. We need vigilance.

Where are we going? The future lies in keeping a culture of safeguarding alive in our parishes, among clergy, in our schools and activities and institutions.

That said there are remarkable changes. Who would have thought just a few years ago that in a major radio interview, Marie Collins would be the one challenging Church authorities as one representing the positions of the Pope?

Towards Healing and Towards Peace are two organisations which are reaching out to survivors to help them on the journey of healing and peace. The National Board has completed its audits of dioceses and hopefully the audits of Religious Congregations will be completed by the end of this year. But that does not mean that the book has reached its final chapter and can now be closed. Audit and accountability must remain an essential pillar of Church structures, perhaps in new ways, but always respecting the autonomy of the National Board.

The results of the audits have at times been far from satisfactory. That shows that the culture of safeguarding is not evenly imbedded across the Church and that is a cause of concern. Survivors are still coming forward which means that for years they have been suffering without feeling able to tell their story and share their grief.

But we also have to say "full marks" to all those who have worked for a real sea-change in the attitude and practice of the Church in safeguarding and who have made the Church today a much safer place for children thus making the work of evangelising and bringing the message of Jesus to our young people more effective.



Archbishop Martin speaking at the information morning
(photograph by John McElroy)

Archbishop Martin also paid tribute to Brid Caffrey, seen here with Una Allen, Director of Towards Peace. Brid addressed the meeting. She spoke simply and very movingly about her experiences as someone who experienced abuse by a priest as a young person and of her struggle with her faith, her relationship with God and with the Church. She was speaking in the context of the introduction of Towards Peace, a spiritual support service for survivors of abuse. Una Allen, Director of Towards Peace, also addressed the meeting. An edited version of Una Allen's address is given below.



Brid Caffrey (left) and Una Allen at the information morning
(photograph by John McElroy)

INTRODUCING TOWARDS PEACE

Una Allen, Director

Towards Peace is a new service offering spiritual support to survivors and victims of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, which was perpetrated by Church personnel, either on an individual level or in institutions. Towards Peace offers a service for those whose faith has been damaged by abuse. It is a response to the continually growing understanding of the spiritual impact of the trauma of abuse.

Towards Peace is the third strand of what has come to be known as a 'One Church' response to the devastation that clerical sexual abuse has wreaked upon our society. Towards Peace seeks to build on the work of the other two services instigated by the Irish Catholic church; the National Board for Safeguarding Children, which puts the safeguarding and protection of children firmly at the centre of its work; and of Towards Healing, the counselling service which provides counselling and other supports for anybody who was abused in childhood by Church personnel on the island of Ireland.

Towards Peace has its origin in the Response to Survivors Initiative which was commissioned by the Irish Bishop's Conference in 2009 at the height of the fallout from the Ferns, Ryan and Murphy Reports. People who had experienced abuse at the hands of representatives of the Catholic Church had spoken about their struggle with

their faith, of their sense of rejection by the Church and of abandonment by God. A group of bishops began to meet with individual survivors as well as groups representing survivors. The bishops listened to and heard these very strong feelings of anger and betrayal and, above all, a profound sense of loss. In response to these heart-rending testimonies the Bishops of Ireland wrote their Pastoral letter: Towards Healing and Renewal 2011 in which they made a commitment to try to support survivors in their spiritual well-being. Herein lie the seeds of Towards Peace.

Thousands of people have availed of the counselling provided by Towards Healing and feedback from those who have taken part has been overwhelmingly positive. But additional questions, beyond the reach of psychology on its own, remain for many people who have suffered abuse – theological questions, such as:

How did God allow this to happen to me?

Who am I in the sight of God?

Can God live in me after the abuse?

How can I ever trust or relate to God again?

Will I ever be able to pray or experience the sacraments at the meaningful moments of my life?

Where can I find community?

Towards Peace is being offered as a support to those survivors and victims of abuse, who are asking these questions – people who might wish to resume, or continue their search for meaning, their journey into wholeness, their spiritual quest.

Towards Peace is a response to an articulated need, voiced by survivors of abuse that occurred within a Church context. The service provides spiritual direction or companionship for a period of one year (9 sessions). Spiritual direction or companionship is concerned with helping a person directly with his or her relationship with God, and attending to the inner life. It is a sort of 'soul care' which offers the individual the opportunity to meet with another believer for the purpose of examining his/her relationship with God.

The service is offered free of charge to those who have suffered abuse from representatives of the Catholic Church. The spiritual companions who will accompany those seeking to undertake this journey are women and men, lay and religious, who live in various parts of the country. They are all trained spiritual directors, in supervision and willing to undertake ongoing training. The spiritual companions all have experience of walking with people in their exploration of that inner life which is common to us all. The service is funded by the Irish Bishops Conference, the Conference

of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union. It is governed by a Board comprising of religious and lay representatives. It is been set up on a pilot basis and will be reviewed at the end of 2016. There are two part-time project staff and they are based in Maynooth.

There is no pre- determined road map for this journey. Each person travels their own spiritual journey at their own pace. Towards Peace is offering an invitation to those who feel ready for it, to set out on that road, to explore the landscape as it opens up before them, and to discover a path that leads towards a deeper spiritual peace.

Website: www.towardspeace.ie
Email: towardspeace@iecon.ie
Telephone: 01 5053028 or 086 7710533

(Office open Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm)

ANNUAL UPDATE

As of 30 April 2015, there were 106 Dublin Diocesan Priests against whom allegations of child sexual abuse have been made, five more than the previous year. Of these five, three are deceased and two retired. While this is an increase, the trend in terms of the overall number of complaints is downward. CSPS deals with complaints against a wide range of people holding positions in the Church including lay employees and volunteers, religious priests, brothers and sisters and priests of other dioceses. The overall number of such complaints has declined steadily. They were running at about 100 per annum in 2010/ 2011 but over the past two years there have been less than 40 per annum.

One day training was delivered to approximately 680 people as opposed to 350 in the previous twelve months. Three hour information sessions were provided to over 300 people, as compared with 150 the previous year. This was achieved through increasing



Archbishop Martin and Andrew Fagan at the information morning
(photograph by John McElroy)

from three to five the number of trainers accredited with NBSCCCI, with another, Julie McCullough, due to be accredited shortly. In addition, as previously reported, Garry Kehoe took on a paid position with CSPS, thus increasing his availability.

CSPS, under the direction of the diocesan Safeguarding Committee,

has been looking at how diocesan safeguarding policy is implemented across parishes and also at what help and support parishes require in this implementation. Fr Paddy Boyle, Julie McCullough and Garry Kehoe have been visiting parishes, helping them to audit their own practice and assisting through the provision of

advice, information and training.

Seven thousand vetting applications were processed over the year.

The Priest Support Coordinator, Gerry Deegan, continued to monitor and support priests and former priests out of ministry due to child protection concerns. This is a vital part of the work that is done to minimise the risk to the safety of children and the diocese will continue to do this for as long as is necessary.

CSPS provided support to over 20 people over the year: some who were

contacting the Diocese for the first time; others who have been in contact for a number of years. Initially people come to tell their story of abuse. CSPS puts them in touch with Towards Healing and maintains direct contact with them in accordance with their needs and wishes. Archbishop Martin's willingness to meet with people who were abused as children and to meet with those who have suffered because of the abuse of a loved one, has often been profoundly significant in their journey towards hope and healing. The availability of spiritual direction and companionship, provided by Towards Peace, is a very significant

addition to the range of supports provided to survivors of abuse.

Archbishop Martin reminds us that there is no room for complacency. We must continue to support those who have been hurt by abuse that occurred within the diocese. We must continue to take the necessary steps to minimise risk to children when a new allegation of abuse arises. What these figures suggest is that we can spend more of our time in the future on prevention and the creation and maintenance of environments that are not just safe but are also welcoming and nurturing for children.

TRAINING SCHEDULE, AUTUMN/ WINTER 2015

Please contact the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service Office (tel. 01-836014 or email: cps@dublindiocese.ie) for further information or to reserve a place on one of these courses.

SEPTEMBER

Date	Venue	Time
Saturday, 5th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:00
Saturday, 26th	Cabinteely (to be confirmed)	09:30 – 15:00

OCTOBER

Date	Venue	Time
Saturday, 10th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30

NOVEMBER

Date	Venue	Time
Saturday, 7th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30
Saturday, 21st	Kilcullen (to be confirmed)	09:30 – 15:30
Saturday, 28th	Arklow (to be confirmed)	09:30 – 15:30

DECEMBER

Date	Venue	Time
Saturday, 5th	Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road	09:30 – 15:30

CONTACT DETAILS

Child Safeguarding and Protection Service, Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road, Dublin 3.
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