



NEWSLETTER



Young Dublin Pilgrims with Archbishop
Blase Cupich, Archdiocese of Chicago,

(Photo taken by Fr. Brendan Foley C.S.Sp.)

WORLD YOUTH DAY

In July of this year, just over 200 young pilgrims travelled from Dublin to Krakow to participate in World Youth Day (WYD). WYD is a week-long event that was started by St John Paul II in 1985. It brings together young people from around the world to share and celebrate their faith. It involves prayer, catechesis, participation in the sacraments and culminates in Mass with the Pope, after an all-night vigil. It takes place in different parts of the world, usually alternating between a European and non-European location. The previous WYD was in Brazil and the next one will be in Panama.

Young people from Dublin have participated in WYD since it started.

Some new innovations took place this year. For the first time since 2005 the Archdiocese included a group of pilgrims aged 16 and 17. A new leadership programme for volunteer young adult leaders was developed to assist the co-ordination of a large group that comprised pilgrims aged 16 to 30.

Taking any large group away is always a lot of hard work and a huge responsibility. However, if they are all adults there is a sense in which they can be expected to take care of themselves. Taking a group that includes minors (young

people under 18) is a challenge of a different order. Their parents are entrusting the care of their children to the organisers. The decision to accept the responsibility for young pilgrims was a courageous one. Fr Kieran Mc Dermott, Vicar for Evangelisation, Gerard Gallagher, who coordinated the Dublin pilgrimage, and the other members of the team are to be congratulated for accepting this responsibility and discharging it with humour, enthusiasm and careful consideration of the needs of each of the young pilgrims. Those of us privileged to accompany the young pilgrims know what a special experience it was for them, one that will be with them for the rest of their lives.

It is sometimes said that all of our safeguarding policies, practices and procedures make it impossible to engage in activities with children and young people. In fact, the opposite is the case. It is the very existence of such policies and practices that gives us the confidence to know that we can care for children and young people safely. It also gives confidence to the parents of young people to allow them to participate because they can be confident that those taking on responsibility for their children are committed to looking after them well.



CONFIRMATIONS AND COMMUNIONS

Guidelines on taking photographs

The taking of photographs at First Communion and Confirmations has been the source of some contention in recent years and some of the arguments to which it has given rise have been aired in the public media.

It is very understandable that proud parents, grandparents and others would wish to have photographs of their children on these special occasions. There is no prohibition on taking photographs at such ceremonies. Photographs, however, should be taken at the appropriate time. In addition, people need to remember not to take photographs of other people's children without the consent of the children's parents.

First Communion and Confirmations are first and foremost religious occasions. People should be asked to bear this in mind and not to do anything to undermine the sacredness of the occasion. For this reason, the most appropriate times for taking photographs will usually be before and after, but not during, the service.

Priests and parish safeguarding representatives cannot be expected to 'police' these events in order to ensure compliance with these guidelines. This would only serve to

further undermine the sacredness of the occasion. Rather the expectations of those attending should be explained simply and in positive terms, that is, as a means of ensuring that all of those present, the children and the wider faith community, can participate fully and without distraction. It is then up to the people present to decide whether or not to comply with what is being asked of them.

On a recent visit to a parish church, the author noticed the presence of a significant number of boys and girls in their First Communion outfits. They had made their Communion the previous day. Their parents had brought them back for Mass the following day and took the opportunity, when there were fewer people around, to take the photographs then. In other parishes, groups of parents get together and organise for a professional photographer to be available on the day to take the photographs on their behalf. With a little forward planning it should be possible to accommodate everyone's wishes.


A fuller discussion of this and related issues is available on: <http://cspis.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2012/02/Use-of-Information-Technology-Guidance-2015.doc>

VULNERABLE ADULTS

Earlier this year, Archbishop Martin requested that the CSPS and the committees with which we work, the diocesan Advisory Panel on Child Protection and the diocesan Safeguarding Committee would broaden our remit to take on responsibility for vulnerable adults. An interim policy on safeguarding vulnerable adults has been developed and we are in the process of recruiting a new member of the CSPS team. This person will complete the policy, develop guidance and design and implement a training programme.

One of the challenges of this new area of work will be about achieving clarity about what it means to be a vulnerable adult. Everyone knows what a child is (a young person under the age of 18) but there is no agreed definition of a vulnerable adult.

Both the vetting legislation and the legislation on withholding of information on offences against children and vulnerable persons have definitions of vulnerable persons which are both complex and somewhat different from each other. The HSE have developed a national policy and procedures on vulnerable adults and they have a definition which incorporates key elements of the legal definitions. It defines a vulnerable person as "an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation".



The challenges of safeguarding vulnerable adults differ somewhat from those of safeguarding children. Though we recognise four forms of child abuse: neglect and physical, emotional and sexual abuse, public attention has tended to focus on the last of these. Sadly, recent UK research would indicate a significant problem with the sexual abuse of older people living in care homes. However, there are categories of abuse of vulnerable adults that do not apply to children. Financial abuse is one such. As we develop our practice guidance, we will have to consider situations such as visiting older, frail parishioners in their own home. As it is many organisations such as the Vincent de Paul Society and the Legion of Mary insist that their members do visitation in pairs. These and other important issues will be considered by our new Safeguarding Officer when she or he takes up position. Our new policy will be developed in consultation with those working with vulnerable adults and with the civil authorities.

VETTING UPDATE

CSPS processes vetting applications on behalf of primary schools that are under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. In late August we began receiving such applications in large volumes as the schools got geared up for the new school year. New applications were coming in at the rate of up to 150 per day and we were dealing with hundreds of queries as the schools struggled to make sense of guidance issued by the Department of Education and Skills. Vetting is, generally, a full time position for one member of the team, with others helping out as required. To cope with this volume of new work three additional staff were asked to assist. Despite this willing cooperation, and all involved working extra hours and coming in on days off, it has proved impossible to deal with both queries and applications as speedily as we would wish.

Earlier this year we asked parishes to hold on submitting non-essential applications for vetting to allow us to get the grips with both the new legislation and the new system of electronic or e-vetting. Your cooperation in this matter

has been much appreciated. At this point, we would ask you to continue to prioritise those who must be vetted immediately, those who are commencing work or ministry with children or vulnerable adults. Those who have already been vetted do not require to be re-vetted at this point.

Diocesan policy will be amended to take account of the vetting legislation. The diocesan Safeguarding Committee has produced proposals for a new policy. These are under consideration and the new policy will be in place by the end of the year.

We will begin a process of re-vetting next year. We wish to do this in a planned and orderly fashion and we will start with priests, deacons, parish sisters, parish pastoral works, catechists and those with similar roles in parishes.

It is likely that delays in responding to queries will continue for some time to come. We apologise for this and ask for your continued cooperation and understanding.

TRAINING SCHEDULE

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.

Date	Venue	Time
Saturday 8 October	Clonliffe College	9.30 to 3.30
Saturday 15 October	Maynooth	9.30 to 3.30
Saturday 22 October	Raheny	9.30 to 3.30
Saturday 5 November	Greystones	9.30 to 3.30
Saturday 12 November	Clonliffe	9.30 to 3.30
Saturday 3 December	Clondalkin Village	9.30 to 3.30
Monday 17 October and Monday 24 October	Rush	7.30 to 10.00

Garry Kehoe is available to you to discuss your training needs and those of your parish or group. He is contactable at 01-836 0314 or garry.kehoe@dublindiocese.ie

CONTACT DETAILS

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