



Safeguarding Development Newsletter

(Feb. 2017, Issue 2)



“I will hold you in the palms of my hands”
(Isaiah 49.16)

Fr. John Meagher OSA above who celebrated his 100th birthday 20 Sept. 2016 with his grand-niece, Laura McGurk, who was present along with family and friends to celebrate the great occasion hosted by the Community and Staff of St. Augustine’s Ballyboden.

(Photo taken Sept. 1996).

Safeguarding Development Group

The Safeguarding Development Group (SDG) is now well established. Members include (from left to right below): Fr. John Hennebry OSA, Pauline Ní Dhuibhir, Annette Comiskey, Geraldine Carey Van Dam, Joan Donovan, Mary Bryne, Fr. Michael Collender and Tony Murphy.



Five meetings have taken place to-date: 23 April, 13 May, 11 June, 10 Sept; & 26 Nov. 2016 based on an 86% attendance record. Agenda items have included: reviewing the Safeguarding Plan '15 – '16, Local Audits and the New One Church Policy; devising a new Vetting Policy Recommendation; contributing to the drafting of the *OSA Safeguarding & Child Protection Development Plan '17 – '19*; considering a suitable design process for producing Child & Young People Friendly Materials; exploring best communications and consultation routes with Priors/Friars & Local Safeguarding Groups (LSGs).

Invitation

**OSA Safeguarding Network
Aisling Hotel, Dublin**

(10.30am - 3.45pm) Saturday, 1 April 2017.

All Local Safeguarding Group Members are invited to join the SDG Members to meet each other, share experiences and discuss in the round the current Safeguarding challenges we face and our future hopes for the Province.

Tea & Coffee from 10.30am for 11am start.

Encouraging Our Communities of Faith

While not all OSA Communities are working directly with children the following profile helps to illustrate the current overview; other initiatives are being actively worked on and hopefully, will develop more formally in the future:

OSA Church (*Parish)	Family Mass (+ Children's Choir)	Special Liturgy of the Word &/or Children's Catechesis	Altar Servers
Drogheda,	✓ +	✓	✓
St. Catherine's Meath St;*	✓ +	✓	✓
Good Counsel Ballyboden*	✓ (Feast Days)	✓	✓
Galway*	✓	✓	✓
Finglas South*	✓ (on occasion)	✓	*
Fethard	✓ + (with adults)	*	✓
Cork	✓ (Polish Community)	*	*
Dungarvan,	*	*	✓
John's Lane,	*	*	*
Limerick	*	*	*

(Note: The above information was mainly gleaned from Local Safeguarding Audits completed in late 2015 or early 2016. ✓ = Yes & * = No).

Does No Ministry with Children = No Safeguarding?

"We don't have any children involved here in the Church." While this statement is factually true in certain church locations, it might give the false impression that children or families never enter the church. Similarly, it may be used to downplay the need to communicate a Safeguarding message: *the safety of children comes above all else*. Parents, guardians, uncles, aunts and grandparents will be re-assured by this message. However, everyone must feel secure: the children, those who work directly with them and those who have occasional contact with them. In this way Safeguarding becomes a shared value, a 'way of doing things' around here and an encouraging experience.



Irish Bishops 'Ad Limina' Visit to Pope Francis

In addressing the Pope recently (20 Jan.), Archbishop Eamonn Martin stated:

“So much has changed for Church and society in Ireland in the ten years since our last ‘ad limina’ visit in 2006. Since then we have been making determined efforts to safeguard children and vulnerable persons from abuse. I assure you that it remains a priority of the Church in Ireland to acknowledge and learn from the past, and persevere in our efforts to bring healing to all those affected by the sinful and criminal acts of abuse.”

So Why a Safeguarding Ministry?

We choose to pro-actively create safe environments for children and those who work with them in the hope of planting the seeds of faith and communion with God in and through others. This is another ministry imbued with Gospel values. All related work therefore merely becomes a record of this pastoral approach.

Engaging with children through the Family Mass Team in Drogheda and separately with a group of Transition Year Students in Good Counsel College, New Ross is an expression of this work. They will assist us to communicate in their language about how to treat each other with respect; knowing what to expect from adults and knowing what to do if feeling insecure.

A New 'Be-Attitude'?

What was contained within the Sermon on the Mount already provided guidance for what is now expressed in the Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Catholic Church in Ireland:

“We recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.”

And therefore a new 'Be-Attitude' might read:

Blessed are those who Safeguard: you sow the sacred seeds of welcome, respect, encouragement, participation, care, leadership, challenge, hope, apology, forgiveness and justice as reflecting the wholesome presence of God.

