

Safeguarding Weekend



Safeguarding Weekend 2021
Augustinian Province of Ireland
16, Zion Road,
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D06FA30



2021

Safeguarding 2021

Over the past year we have all plumbed the depths of the experience of Safeguarding. We have looked out for each other and especially the most vulnerable in society. We have taken extreme action, up to and including the dispersal of our faith community, to ensure everyone was as safe as possible. We have kept our distance, made the greatest efforts to ensure our Churches and sacred spaces were as safe as we could make them. We have ensured only the most suitable people were put in charge of ministries and committees and we have developed, in a relatively short time, safer ways and more rigorous protocols to ensure the wellbeing of all. We have even developed new ways of engaging online and by streaming and also, returned to some older ways – telephone calls, letter writing, among others.

All of these actions are mirrored in what we do in our safeguarding practices to create safe and sacred spaces for children, young people, volunteers, friars, staff and adults who may be vulnerable.

This work is founded upon three key priorities:
1. Choose volunteers carefully. 2. Train them to behave appropriately. 3. Ensure activities are safe for all involved.

The challenge now is to learn from recent experiences and cautiously, gradually, re-emerge and create anew the kind of Church we make up together.

It will never be the same again – we know that. Nothing ever is after a crisis of these proportions, but the Holy Spirit will inflame and guide us as the Holy Spirit always does and lead us back to the core of our Christian calling - to spread the Good News.

This is no time to hide or retreat, but to learn and prayerfully imagine how things might be in the new future and, with due care and diligence, push on and make that Jesus dream a reality. Two recent policy changes to note: both Garda Vetting and Safeguarding Training will now run on a three-year cycle rather than four. We

believe this will keep us more on our toes with face-to-face training hopefully being delivered again in early 2022.

This weekend in particular, I thank with the greatest sincerity the ongoing efforts of our local safeguarding teams who throughout this crisis have not lost sight of their role in being the umbrella ministry which keeps us all safe. As Pope Francis reminded us in 2015, “Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children.” He continues, “They should also know that they have every right to turn to the Church in full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home.” Or as we choose to phrase it, it is a safe and sacred space.

I also thank the Safeguarding Group we have established at Provincial level. We continued to meet and evaluate our progress and train for possibilities, including online ministry, into the future. We have a case management team who monitor any allegations that arise. Should you ever wish to raise a concern please contact Mr Tony Murphy who is our Augustinian Designated Liaison Person (087 2211235 & Safeguarding@augustinians.ie) or contact the local TUSLA Office and/or Garda Station (details are on display in church). As with all Augustinian ministries, it is teamwork that has and will bring us through.

A short plea to conclude. All groups need new blood and the fresh ideas and enthusiasm and energy that comes with that. Please contact the Prior or Parish Priest if you are available to assist in this key ministry locally. And if you are available to assist with our Provincial group, tell him or a member of the Safeguarding Team too.

As I conclude my own ministry as Provincial, I wish you all every blessing and success and wish my successor, Fr. Tony Egan OSA, continued best wishes in this challenging arena too.



John Hennebery OSA
Prior Provincial