



# Message from the Provincial Leadership Team

## October 2020

Child abuse is a crime in Ireland and in most countries in the world. It is also a crime against the laws of the Catholic church – canon law – in every part of the world. Abuse of a child by a priest or religious not only causes physical, emotional, and psychological harm but also imperils their relationship with God.

It saddens me greatly that some members of the Irish Province have abused children in the past. My predecessors on the Leadership Team put policies and procedures in place to ensure, as far as is humanly possible, that such abuse does not happen in the future. I, along with the current Leadership Team, am determined to continue that work and build on it, to meet whatever challenges emerge in the future.

Our Safeguarding Office, established in 2012, continues to up-date our safeguarding procedures, in line with recommendations from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI), and necessitated by changes in legislation. It organises Garda vetting for all Spiritans, employees and volunteers, and delivers a training programme to meet the needs of the different ministries in the Congregation.

The Congregation ensures that all allegations of child abuse against Spiritan personnel are reported to the relevant statutory authorities. People who come forward to speak of their experience will be treated with respect and compassion and offered support.

We must not become complacent. We have to continue to ensure that all children participating in activities under the auspices of the Congregation receive optimum protection. I exhort all Spiritan personnel – confrères, employees and volunteers – to keep the safeguarding of children as a priority in all our ministries, mindful of our commitment to “the little ones”.

I encourage anybody who has a safeguarding concern to contact our Safeguarding Office – contact details available on this website.

I, along with our Leadership Team, confrères, employees and volunteers will do all in our power to provide a safe, supportive environment for all children with whom we interact.

Fr Martin Kelly CSSp  
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