

Inquiry into Child Abuse – from Bishop Paul

On Tuesday 10 November, the Independent Inquiry into Child Abuse (IICSA), will publish its report into the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Whilst the Church with its different dioceses and religious orders will be the focus of the report, our hearts go out to anyone who has suffered abuse in a Church setting.

Such acts represent a gross breach of trust and are truly reprehensible.

We acknowledge that victims and survivors have usually endured years of pain, made worse by the failures to listen and respond to their voices.

We anticipate the report will make many recommendations to the Church. The Bishops and the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in England and Wales have already commissioned an independent review of our Catholic safeguarding arrangements, especially at national level.

This has been undertaken under the leadership of Ian Elliot, a renowned safeguarding consultant. His report is also due to be published soon.

The following offer support and advice:

1. *Safe Spaces*, run by Victim Support on behalf of the Catholic and Anglican churches, is for anyone who feels

they have experienced Church-related abuse of any form in England or Wales, whether this is in the past or is happening now. A confidential helpline and live chat facility is available, Mon - Sat, 10.00am - 6.00pm (Thu 12.00 - 8.00pm): phone 0300 303 1056; live chat www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk.

2. Our Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator: Jane Robinson janer@lancasterrcdiocese.org.uk; 07935-931947. All concerns and allegations regarding abuse in the Church should be reported here. It is national policy that all such reports are referred to the statutory authorities.

The Bishop has also offered a prayer:

Lord, you are a healing and compassionate Father.
You know your children's ability to hurt one another,
and in so doing we hurt you.

Reach out to those who carry pain or guilt.
Walk with those who are in the night of despair.
Reassure those who have lost hope.

Stay with those who are hurt, angry or betrayed.

May Christ your Son renew our efforts
to become examples of your love in the world.

We pray especially for those whose needs are greatest,
those whose despair is deepest.

We pray with confidence through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.