



NEWSLETTER 2024



Message from Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan

It is good to get this opportunity to thank all those who work in Safeguarding in our Diocese.

In the Summer of 2023 the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland conducted an audit of safeguarding in our parishes.

The findings are very positive. We can be rightly proud of how we are providing and encouraging safe places for our young people to worship God within the Church community. However, we can never claim that safeguarding is now fully under control.

The safeguarding of all, especially the young and the vulnerable, will always be crucial. I wish to commend in a particular way our new Safeguarding Officer, Stephen Plunkett, Fr. John Harris, all the L.S.R.'s, our Child Safeguarding Committee, and the Diocesan Office staff engaged in the vetting process.

It is a true work of the Holy Spirit to see so many people who give of themselves out of love of the Church. I hope you will read in this Newsletter about some of the many good things going on in our Diocese.

+ Alphonsus Cullinan

Diocese of 
Waterford & Lismore



Theology of Safeguarding

An unintended consequence of children's safeguarding in the Church, is to exclude children from participating in Church liturgies and activities. This is a contradiction to what Christ asks of the Church in the Gospels. The stories of Jesus and his welcome of children in the Gospels present a beautiful image of what it means to be a parish in whom the Risen Christ dwells.

A parish that fears children at its centre, is a parish that fears Christ. Children are not the danger; they are the litmus test to the faith of a parish. When children are safe, a parish flourishes in faith. It is a parish that reflects Christ among us.



Leaders and children enjoying the Good News Faith Camp in Tramore in July, one of two Campa Mhuire Mháthair Faith Camps for Children in the Diocese in July 2023. Both camps will run again in July 2024.



Pope John Paul II Awards

Students from Blackwater Community School who were some of the 45 participants from across the diocese who received their Pope John Paul II Awards for their efforts in 2022/2023. Numbers undertaking the Pope John Paul II Award in 2023 - 2024 have increased - it is very encouraging to see so many teenagers continuing to step up to take an active role in their parish and community.



Safeguarding Training

In 2023 / 2024 over 200 people attended safeguarding training in the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore.

Those who attended included members of Religious Communities, Lourdes Youth Leaders and Lourdes Staff Members, Campa Mhuire Mháthair Faith Camp leaders, Holy Family Mission, members of the Neo-Catechumenal Way, Parish Faith Representatives and other people both staff and volunteers in the diocese. The majority were lay people. The training takes a variety of forms: a full day training and also a half-day refresher option. We are very grateful to all those who undertook safeguarding training so far in the Diocese in 2023/2024.



All Diocesan Safeguarding Policies, Procedures, Forms and other documents required are available at www.waterfordlismore.ie/safeguarding-children.



Diocesan Safeguarding Audit

Key findings from St Paul's Parish

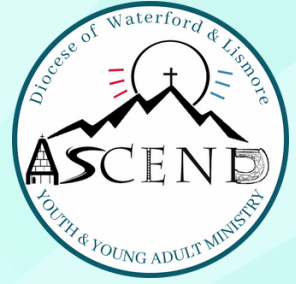
St Paul's Parish was one of two parishes selected by the NBSCCC for the Diocesan Safeguarding Audit. The auditor was impressed by both number of volunteers and their commitment. Below is a summary of best practice found at St Paul's:



- **Sign-in book** for all, including altar servers.
 - Two Altar servers and their parents were spoken to by the auditors and he was very pleased with what he heard.
- **Yearly training for all LSRs** involved in child safeguarding.
- **Members of Parish Council** displayed in Entrance Porch accompanied by their photos.
- **All posters / information** relating to child safeguarding in frames displayed in strategic positions in the porch (not just stuck on noticeboard with BluTack).
- **Multi-lingual poster** displayed.
- **Portfolio of relevant forms and information:**
 - application forms, declaration forms, various volunteer group forms at hand; also consent forms, information booklets for both altar servers and parents. Also included was list of events & activities relating to the church in the parish centre.
- **Portfolio of LSR:**
 - register of all volunteers in parish (name, address & contact details) – broken down to a register of person who has one or more ministries, further broken down to each parish ministry and its coordinator.
 - List of each ministry coordinator indexed separately also.
- **School Liaison information** available.
- **Storage of all forms:**
 - Safe was looked at, access discussed.
 - Safeguarding Drawer where all blank forms area available should someone approach to be a volunteer.
- **Garda Vetting procedures** were asked about.
- **Walkabout in church and parish centre:** noticeboards, child safeguarding information, live-streaming information displayed
- **Parish bulletin discussed** (and how often safeguarding featured therein)
- **Role of Parish Council** and fixed agenda item of safeguarding.
- **Health and Safety Audit** (Risk Assessment) information displayed.
- **Sacristan asked about visiting clergy** and her role in asking for celebret if not known. Notice in sacristy covering this.



Ascend Youth & Young Adult Ministry



On March 20th 2023 the Diocese launched its three-year Ascend Strategic Plan for Youth & Young Adult Ministry, setting out a collaborative approach to walking intentionally with young people on their journey of faith, offering meaningful opportunities for them to encounter Jesus.

On September 29th, following months of recruitment and training, the Diocese commissioned twenty Faith Reps from eleven parishes who for the next two years will collaborate with the Strategic Plan in their own areas. We wish them well in their role for the next two years, and look forward to seeing them collaborate with LSRs and other parish structures to make youth & young adult ministry more readily available at parish level.

This is an exciting development in youth and young adult ministry in the diocese. Please keep these Faith Reps in your prayers, and if you feel called to being part of the team or want to know more about the Strategic Plan and opportunities for youth & young adult ministry in parishes, check out www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry. Training for new Parish Faith Reps began in March this year, with a view to commissioning in September 2024.



Diocesan Safeguarding Contact Details:

If you have a child safeguarding concern or wish to report an allegation, please contact one of the following:

- **Tusla, Child & Family Agency:** 051-842827
- **The Gardaí:** 051 - 305300
- **Garda National Protective Services Bureau:** 01-6663430 / 01-6663435
- **The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore is Fr. John Harris:** 087-9661959
- **The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) is Ms. Anne Walsh** 089 4858845

www.towardshealing.ie | www.towardspeace.ie

