

**Publication of Review of Safeguarding of Children
In the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois.**

The Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois is one of the six dioceses which had its Child Safeguarding procedures reviewed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children. All six dioceses concerned sought to have the Review carried out. I am very pleased that the process has now been completed and I commend the work of Mr Ian Elliot and the National Office for the diligence and professionalism with which they carried out their work. I assure the people of this Diocese and all others who will read the Review on our website (**www.ardaghdiocese.com**) that all the information on how our Diocese has dealt with this difficult matter has been made available for this review.

One cannot but be conscious at this time of the fact that people who suffered because of wrong doing by Church personnel will be affected by having to think again about an experience which pained them deeply. It is my hope that this pain will be lessened by the knowledge that their lives can move into a new phase when some at least of the past can be left behind. I want to express my sorrow at how they have been made to suffer and I want to welcome any contact which any person who is feeling distressed at this time would make with me or with the Diocesan Delegate for Safeguarding of Children.

I want to avail of the opportunity of this time to express my heartfelt thanks to our Diocesan Child Safeguarding Committee, to the priests and lay people who have given much dedicated service to furthering its work. To each and every child safeguarding representative in our parishes I express my sincerest thanks for their commitment to keeping children safe. In the parishes priests and lay people share the burden of caring for children. That unity of purpose is a great source of strength for the Church and for society in fulfilling the responsibility we all have for caring for children.

I am satisfied that we have good policies and procedures for safeguarding children in place. However, I believe that there will always be need for reappraisal and revision. The documentation of our National Board for Safeguarding Children continues to be evaluated and developed. Our diocesan manual and posters published in April 2010 will soon be re-issued with some amendments.

I ask for the prayers and support of the entire community of the faithful of the Diocese at this important moment in our diocesan history. Any person who wishes to make a complaint to the Diocese is invited to contact the Diocesan Designated Person, Mr Sean Leydon at **087 7431649**. Any person who feels the need for counselling is invited to contact the Church's Free Confidential Helpline and Counselling Service, *Towards Healing*, at **1800 303 416**. – www.towardshealing.ie.

Anyone who wishes to make a complaint to the Statutory authorities can approach the Garda Síochána at the contact numbers on our posters and in our handbook. Similarly, the HSE can be contacted as indicated in these documents.

+Colm O'Reilly. Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. 30th November 2011.

NOTE

Bishop Colm O'Reilly will be available for interview later during the day. Please contact Fr. Tom Murray tel: 087 2226037 for further information.