

**Right Reverend Patrick Joseph McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham**

**Pastoral Letter appointed to be read out at all Masses celebrated
on
Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th May 2021.**

7th Sunday of Easter – Diocesan Safeguarding Sunday

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today is Safeguarding Sunday, an opportunity to reflect a little on our journey as a diocese to build a safer environment for every person. Last autumn, an independent review into Safeguarding in the Catholic Church here in England and Wales recommended that three new core agencies be created at a national level, in order to help strengthen still more the safeguarding structures and culture in our dioceses. It is anticipated that these agencies will very soon be up and running. Much more information on these three agencies can be found on the Bishops' Conference website. I pray that their establishment will help bolster our own safeguarding standards across the diocese, and ensure that we are always transparent and accountable in the way we deal with allegations, and caring towards victims and survivors of abuse.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, Clare McKenzie, for her professionalism, dedication and tenacity throughout her time with the diocese, and to welcome our new Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, Rachael Campion. Rachael's career within safeguarding spans over 30 years across different organisations and settings.

She comes to us from the Church of England's Blackburn Diocese, where she was a Safeguarding Advisor. Prior to that, she had considerable safeguarding involvement as an officer with Nottinghamshire Police for 17 years, much of it as an officer in their Public Protection Unit. I am confident that Rachael's wealth of experience and knowledge will be invaluable in helping to maintain a high standard of safeguarding across the diocese.

In today's second reading, from the 1st Letter of John, we are reminded that, "as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us." The duty to love, to safeguard one another, is part of that vocation we all have as Christians - to love and care for each other. At the heart of this calling is the duty to help protect the safety and dignity of our neighbour, especially the most vulnerable.

We cannot simply delegate this duty to parish Safeguarding Representatives or the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator.

Safeguarding is part and parcel of the DNA of every Christian; an essential characteristic of our identity as Christ's followers, and so it must be reflected in the way we protect, respect, and treat each other with care. Only if each one of us is engaged in this way of thinking and acting can we foster a culture of safeguarding throughout our diocese.

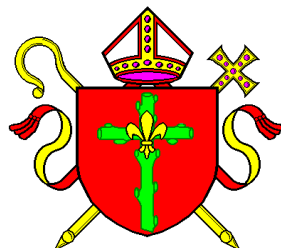
Yesterday, in a Mass of Thanksgiving streamed from St Barnabas Cathedral, I expressed my sincere gratitude to all the parish Safeguarding representatives who have responded so generously to this calling. Your parish has someone who has volunteered to support the whole parish community in making your parish a safe place to be, particularly for children, young people and vulnerable adults (in our parish it is NAME...**).¹ He/she and this network of Safeguarding Reps work really hard in this volunteer role; but building this safe culture in our parishes can't just be left to them – it is the responsibility of all of us. Today, I urge everyone across the diocese to give your own parish rep your full support, and to join with them in fostering a deeper and more evident culture of safeguarding, care and protection for everyone in our parishes.

After all, the Church today and tomorrow should endeavour to be a safe place for everyone, especially those who are most vulnerable in our society. We can all play our part in ensuring that every single individual feels respected, safe, and loved, just as Our Lord asked of us: "as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us."

You are in my prayers, please keep me in yours,

+ Patrick

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**Bishop's House – The Park
Nottingham
May 2021**

¹ **Footnote to priests/deacons

In the section naming the parish rep, if no rep is currently in place, please use the opportunity to raise this with the parish and ask if anyone would be interested in finding out more about this role.