

Message from the Provincial Leadership Team

21st October 2013

Just a year ago the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) published a report following a review of safeguarding practices in the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (The Spiritans). While acknowledging that considerable progress was being made by the Spiritans, the Report did identify a number of areas that needed attention and made 16 Recommendations in that regard.

The Provincial Leadership Team agreed to implement the recommendations and undertook this work, not as an exercise in meeting conditions set down by an external assessor, but with a determination to ensure that the failings of the past would not be repeated in the future and that children and young people engaging with the Spiritans would be safeguarded as much as it is humanly possible to do so.

The Spiritan Safeguarding Office was established in October 2012, and in September of this year invited Ms Teresa Devlin, Acting CEO of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI), to examine the evidence of compliance with the recommendations. Having examined the evidence, Ms Devlin, on behalf of the NBSCCCI, stated that the Congregation had satisfied all 16 recommendations. Commenting on the work of safeguarding as a whole in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Ms Devlin was 'impressed with the work underway' and recognised the 'significant effort that has been made'.

This does not bring an end to the matter. We are always mindful of the pain and hurt caused by some of our members in the past. We continue to work with survivors and their families offering them whatever assistance is appropriate to their needs. We again invite anybody who was abused by a Spiritan in the past to contact our Safeguarding Office or go directly to the Gardaí and/or the HSE.

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is committed to do whatever it can to prevent any abuse of children. We will keep the safeguarding of children paramount in every ministry in which we serve. We will continue to co-operate fully with the civil authorities to ensure that best practice is followed in all matters relating to the safeguarding of children.

Marc Whelan C.S.Sp.

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