



SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

September

2021

in the Catholic Church in Scotland

Looking forward with hope

Fr. Frederico Lombardi SJ, the former director of the Holy See Press Office, recently wrote about how the Catholic Church has been responding in recent times to the challenge of sex abuse.

He acknowledged that the crisis has had a terrible impact on the proclamation of the Gospel because it “has cast the shadow of inconsistency and insincerity over the Church as an institution and on the entire community of the Church.”

Fr Lombardi’s article reminds us that Christians give primacy to recognising the dignity of each person because each of us is made in God’s image.

“So,” he wrote, “the abuse of a person, the lack of respect, considering others as objects, not being attentive to their sufferings, and so on, is a sign that something specific and fundamental is missing in our faith and in our vision of the world.”

In choosing to entitle their national safeguarding manual **IN GOD’S IMAGE**, the Bishops of Scotland gave due recognition to the need to respect the dignity of each person, in particular those who are vulnerable.

In publishing **IGI v2** on 8th September 2021, the Bishops have responded to the call of the Holy Father to embrace the path of renewal that is necessary on the journey towards the conversion and purification of the Church.

“This road,” wrote Fr Lombardi, “must be taken to heal suffering, apply justice, prevent future abuse, restore trust and credibility within the ecclesial community and in the Church’s mission for the good of the world.”

It is the hope and prayer of our Bishops that, in the safeguarding practice of the Catholic Church in Scotland, there is steady movement towards transparency, responsibility and justice.

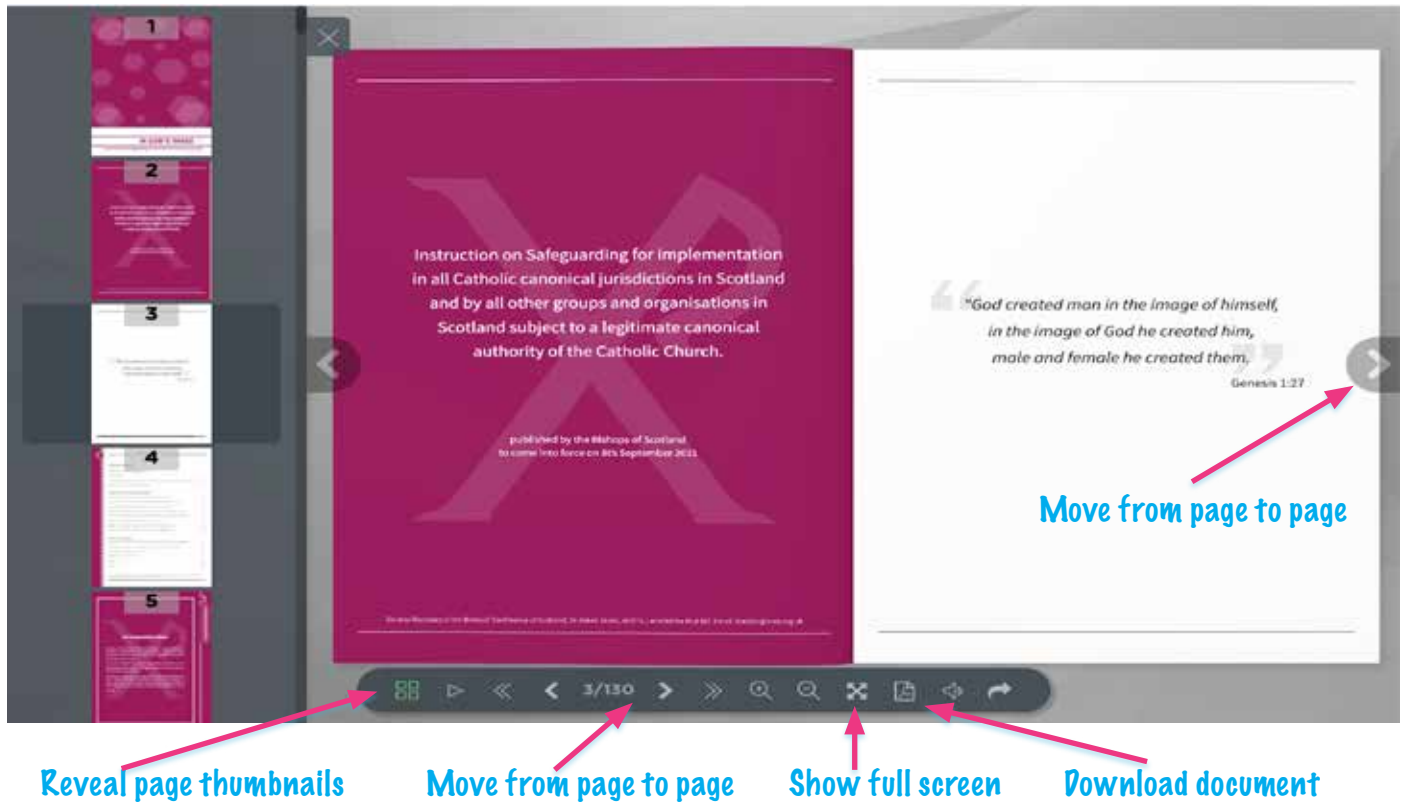
Such progress has been supported by the development of the 8 safeguarding standards that remain at the heart of **IGlv2**, following their endorsement in the consultation on **IGlv1**. When these standards are used to shape the practice of all those responsible for safeguarding across the Catholic community, then we will be taking sure steps on the journey towards the “personal and communal conversion” called for by Pope Francis.

Fr Lombardi recognised that “it is one thing to establish norms or create a framework, and quite another to change the situation, by enforcing them.” This note of caution is timely for the Church in Scotland. Each of us must reflect on how we can apply the guidance and direction that is given in **IGlv2**. - in our parishes, religious communities and wherever the dignity of each person must be respected.

Fr Lombardi’s article was published by Vatican News on 26/08/21. It can be read in full by clicking here.

How to access In God's Image *version 2*

The document has been published on the website of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. When you click on www.bcos.org.uk/InGodsImageV2, you will see the text displayed as a 'flip-book'. This can be adjusted to display in various sizes to suit your laptop/computer/tablet, using the tools shown below.



Other resources now available

This leaflet outlines the safeguarding standards and the core safeguarding messages to be found in 'In God's Image'. It also provides contact details for each DSA.



Each parish, religious community and organisation has received 3 posters for display: 'Our Safeguarding Standards'; 'What To Do' (on first receiving an allegation) and 'Who to contact to report a concern'.



Our safeguarding standards approach

- 01** Creating and maintaining safe Church environments
- 02** Safely recruiting clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers
- 03** Responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse
- 04** Providing care and support for those who have experienced abuse
- 05** Managing and providing care for respondents to allegations of abuse
- 06** Working together to develop a culture of care
- 07** Training and support for all responsible for safeguarding
- 08** Planning for continuous improvement in safeguarding

The 8 safeguarding standards that were introduced in **In God's Image v1** have been retained, with some slight tweaks of language and greater detail, in **IGlv2**. This was the result of the positive endorsement they received in our consultation.

There is a greater emphasis on the purpose of "working together" (No.6) - "to develop a culture of care" and why we are planning (No.8) - "for continuous improvement in safeguarding".

In each standard we firstly show a table of the various elements which are then described in detail. Each standard ends with lists of indicators and evidence that will assist when planning for compliance with each standard.

The detailed processes and procedures that are set out in each standard have been carefully revised to provide norms that must be adopted; others to recommend the best safeguarding practice. Some will be more relevant to parish priests and safeguarding co-ordinators; others must be applied by DSAs or Bishops.

Our safeguarding standards are central to what we do, how we plan and how we evaluate our success.

Changing Safe Recruitment

Unfolding changes to the Disclosure Scotland Act 2020 has required the Church to update its safe recruitment processes to ensure compliance.

Caterina O'Connor, DSA in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, summarises the approach now being developed.

Significant changes to the PVG scheme will alter the way that Dioceses, Religious Congregation, and Catholic organisations recruit those professed, employed and volunteering. It is vital that we meet the challenges posed by these changes and that we develop national processes to meet the needs of the Church and strengthen our culture of safeguarding. Of course, we know that even the best recruitment processes cannot deter someone who is determined to harm, but rigorous, and consistent approaches to safe recruitment will greatly help to create and maintain safe environments for children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

We are presently developing a 3-tiered system of safe recruitment with an initial focus on the process for the roles specified in Tiers 1 and 2 being in place for early 2022.

Requirements for the 3 tiers are:

Tier 1 - full safe recruitment: 2 references + PVG + mandatory training for all those in "regulated roles" that require full compliance

Tier 2 - references + mandatory training for volunteers who work with vulnerable groups but don't now require PVGs

Tier 3 - application form + training for all other volunteers who don't belong to the first two tiers.

More details can be found in **Appendix 3 of IGlv2**. Further developments will be announced.



Reflecting on external scrutiny

Independent audits of safeguarding practice in 4 dioceses have taken place and the remaining 4 dioceses are scheduled for audit over the coming year. **Helena Rameckers**, DSA for the Diocese of Galloway, gives her reflections on the audit experience and how it has led to improvements in diocesan practice.

The Diocese of Galloway learned in 2018 that our diocese would be the first to be audited by SCIE. The very word “audit” naturally created some trepidation, although the feeling in the pews was that we wouldn’t be found dreadfully lacking. Changes to DSAG and to liaison with deaneries had been taking place, under the excellent leadership of Mr. Gerry McCabe who was DSA leading up to, and throughout, the audit process.

The format of the audit process is by now fairly well established and need not be laboured here. A focus group was held, individual meetings took place, and paperwork and records were requested and provided. SCIE methodology does not result in a list of recommendations; rather, we were provided with a report in January 2020 which posed questions for us to consider as a diocese. This enabled us to reflect upon the key findings, and work creatively within our own context to review our safeguarding practices.

We have now addressed the vast majority of the key questions which were raised, with the result that significant improvements have

been made to our communications, processes and procedures. For instance, one of the key questions re. our DSAG was: *Is there an appetite for increasing the scrutiny and challenge role of the DSAG, and would this extend to having an independent representative as a member, perhaps as the Chair?*

Reflecting on this question led us to believe that an independent Chair of DSAG would not only enable increased quality assurance of our safeguarding practices, but would also provide an additional dimension to the safeguarding leadership team, as per the key question: *What is required to create something akin to a functioning senior leadership team for safeguarding in the Diocese?* As a result, an independent Chair with extensive safeguarding experience and qualifications was recruited to our DSAG and, together with the Bishop and Vicar General, comprises a formal senior leadership team.

This relatively simple step has led to a re-structuring of DSAG meetings. The agenda is now structured around the Standards of *In God’s Image*, ensuring that DSAG has the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the operations

team in the light of the national safeguarding instruction, and to ensure that our diocesan action plan reflects the ethos of the Scottish Catholic Church’s growing culture of care. Additionally, formal leadership team meetings allow for oversight of the DSA’s role and create a formal communication channel for work streams to be approved, or improved, as appropriate.

This is just one specific example of how safeguarding within the Diocese of Galloway has developed following the external audit. Overall, both for myself as the current DSA, and for many volunteers in various contexts within the diocesan community, there is now a sense that good work, which has been carried out in a spirit of goodwill, has become even better work which is being carried out according to professional and transparent procedures—leading, ultimately, to a cohesive and well organised team.

To read any of the 4 Diocesan Audit reports, go to:
www.bcos.org.uk/Safeguarding

REGISTER for our safeguarding webinar:
<https://bit.ly/3gQRdPu>



Growing our Culture of Care
Safeguarding Webinar
Saturday 2nd October 11am to 1pm

Gather with Bishops, clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers
as we learn and grow together in our efforts to safeguard all.

Safeguarding Contacts
(phone numbers and website links)

Aberdeen
01224 319154

Glasgow
0141 226 5898

Argyll & Isles
07938 253133

Motherwell
01698 269114

Dunkeld
01382 225453

Paisley
0141 847 6138

Galloway
01292 266750

St Andrews & Edinburgh
0131 623 8949

Scottish Catholic
Safeguarding Service
0141 332 7177

This is the second in a series of newsletters intended to communicate about developments in the Church’s safeguarding practice.
If you have suggestions for topics to be covered in future issues, please email these to: newsletter@bcos.org.uk