



Safeguarding Development Newsletter

(June 2021 – Issue 16)



Safeguarding Network (22 May 2021)

Reconnections & New Insights

Safeguarding Network

22 May 2021 (10:00 – 12:30)



This year's Child Safeguarding Network was primarily about reconnecting with Local Safeguarding Groups (LSGs) and welcoming some new participants. As our world did not completely stand still over the past year there were stories to tell (see below). The story telling helped the 33 participants to briefly engage with the many faces and heart beats of the Augustinian Province.



Monica Walsh (Dungarvan)

The Priory was a beacon of light as the church doors were kept open.

Fr. Richie Goode (St. Catherine's)

While treading water over the past year, it was possible, thankfully, to allow First Communion and Confirmation to go ahead albeit under different arrangements to what normally would happen.

Rosemarie Ryan (Galway)

Though strange, reduced numbers at Christmas Midnight Mass created a most intimate and beautiful liturgy. Overall, there was lots of

thoughtfulness, kindness and collaboration among neighbours in the parish amidst the sadness of death and holding out for a better future.

Fr. Colm O'Mahony (Drogheda)

We kept our music going and we trained some Secondary School Student to become involved as Volunteer Stewards in the church.

Catherine Callinan (John's Lane)

To have Mass and Prayers online was very nice. The numbers participating doubled showing there are different ways of coming together.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

'The Challenges of Safeguarding in These Times.'



Sandra Neville: wife, mother and Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the Kiltegan Fathers, Columbans, Mill Hill Missionaries and Our lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. She provides Garda Vetting and Covid Support for AMRI and facilitates safeguarding training overseas for congregations and NGO's. Pastimes: walking, cycling (weather permitted), reading and in the winter jigsaws.

The theme of Sandra's input was "The Challenges of Safeguarding in these times." What follows is a summary of that input:

"On reflection, there would appear to be some similarities between how we generally responded to COVID and the past child sex abuse scandals in the church. For some it was a case of this will not happen to me! For others, a feeling of fear applied. In both cases we had to learn a new language: R rate; antigen testing; social distancing; asymptomatic; community transmission; contact tracing and variants of concern. While it took time to introduce new safety and hygiene measures, nearly everyone can now measure out two metres.

Yet we might ask: Who will come back to church after three lockdowns? Was the same question not asked when the abuse scandals became known?

A key factor that will greatly influence future participation is the Culture of Safeguarding and the Culture within the church. It is the strongest force in any organisation, more determined by the group rather than any individual's actions but is created from the top. It is about how we do things around here. It is the prevalent attitude that we communicate in spoken and

unspoken messages. It is the soul of the organisation. It is about the safety of all individuals.

- C** – Control: Health/Openness/Welcome.
- U** – Understanding/Watch your language.
- L** – Leadership as a shared activity.
- T** – Trust that our structures & procedures are good & true.
- U** – Unafraid to reach out & try something new & vibrant.
- R** – Responsive to parents and children's needs.
- E** – Execution of the ideas & follow-up actions with review

Post-Covid offers an opportunity to stretch our minds and to introduce new things. Where the culture is based on trust and truth, then people will give over and above what is asked of them.

Of the 28 Vetting Applications I processed earlier this morning, all were for young people and young adults who wished to be involved in church ministry (i.e. summer camp for children). We need to make our church a vibrant and safe place so that young people feel welcomed and will wish to join with is as part of faith formation."

Interesting comments arose in the **Questions & Answers** slot that followed:

- ❖ The language we use to describe our work & that of Safeguarding is very important.
- ❖ Reaching Out may be the new church (e.g. listening to parents).
- ❖ In the long-term could sacramental participation in First Communion & Confirmation be more fruitful if completed at an older age?
- ❖ We may be called to gather in smaller numbers.
- ❖ Adult Faith Formation – exploring why we want to do ‘church’ could be a way forward.

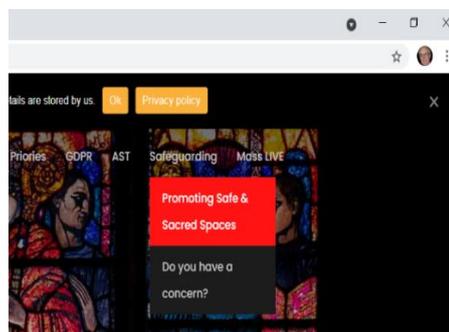


Since May 2020 SDG members have continued to meet and work via Zoom. Four important areas of work addressed in that period were profiled in presentations made by individual SDG members. A summary of each now follows.

SAFEGUARDING WEBPAGE

Fr. Michael Collender osa

Type www.augustinian.ie into your search engine (e.g. Chrome; Windows Explorer or Firefox) and press Return ↵. Across the top of the page (Harry Clarke stained glass windows) you will see the heading *Safeguarding* with two drop-down options: *Promoting Safe & Sacred Spaces* and *Do You Have a Concern?* Choose the first red option.



This will give you access to many useful resources and publications, an insightful video about Safeguarding in the Irish Church and links to other relevant websites.

For those wishing to raise a concern or disclose a historical wrongdoing, a separate page offers an Augustinian commitment to respond with a range of contact details from which to choose.

It is hoped the Safeguarding webpage will act as another support to LSGs wanting to put their hands on a relevant resource or publication.

WORKING with CHILDREN ONLINE

Geraldine Carey Van Dam

Seven SDG members took part in a workshop 28 Jan. 2021 delivered by NBSCCCI via Zoom. It was an opportunity for the SDG to taste and see what local leaders would require if working online with children. In the absence of face to face 'church' our thinking was:

This could be a way of re/connecting with younger members of our church communities, if local leaders wanted to continue and/or start ministering in this way.

While we anticipated there would be risks involved, our focus was more on exploring what opportunities this way of working could offer future ministry with children.

Good Planning & Preparation will be involved at two levels:

Provincial Responsibilities

- Develop Policy for Ministry with Children Online.
- Publish Separate Codes of Behaviour for Adults & Children.
- Provide Training for Local Leaders.
- Safeguarding Officer to Assist & Oversee Practice.
- Pilot session & review.



Local Responsibilities

- Identify the ministry activity & age group in consultation with Prior/PP.
- Consult with parents & develop awareness of safety approaches.
- Complete Parental Consent Forms.
- Select suitable content & images to meet participants' needs.



Where local leaders may wish to explore working with children or young people online, best to speak with the Prior/PP and LSG members first. Support can then be sought from the SDG & Safeguarding Officer.



LOCAL PROGRESS REPORT (REVISED)

Lorraine Collins



Firstly, we would like to thank you for your work on returning the annual Progress Report last September. It may have seemed a bit unnecessary considering the restrictions we have been under due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet good quality up to-date record keeping within your Church/Parish is always vital. No doubt, you will find filling out this report much easier since you will be reporting from April 2020 – April 2021.

This review and planning process is a key element of each Local Safeguarding Group's efforts to ensure a pro-active approach to Safeguarding children and those who work with them.

Together we get to tell the 'good news' story of Augustinian Safeguarding.

Please read the *Introduction* (p.2) before starting to complete the report. The layout has been condensed (5 Sections) and designed

to be more user-friendly and hopefully, easier to follow:

Section 1.

Local Safeguarding Group:
Membership & Meetings
(Standard 1).

Section 2.

Overview of Active Volunteers
(18 yrs. +)
(Standards 1 and 5).

Section 3.

Overview of Ministry with
Children/Young People &
Volunteer Leaders (Standard 1).

Section 4.

Communicating the Safeguarding
Message
(Standard 6).

Section 5.

Reviewing Progress Achieved &
Planning for the Future
(Standard 7).

Section 5, containing some prompt questions, will allow you to describe:

- (1) *What Safeguarding goals were set during the last year?*
- (2) *What goals were achieved or not?*
- (3) *What goals in the coming year will enhance Safeguarding standards in your church community or parish?*

Finally, a soft copy will issue shortly for completion on or before 31 July 2021. Thank you.

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Joan Donovan



Look at some of the evaluations we do automatically in our homes everyday:

- ✓ Removing small objects from the reach of a crawling toddler.
- ✓ Placing a guard gate on a stair.
- ✓ Storing medicines and household chemicals securely.
- ✓ Interviewing a childminder, checking referees & requesting Garda Vetting.

You might well say that these actions are plain common sense. That is what they are. That is why we do them.

In speaking of Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment (CSRA) I am speaking of it in relation to ministry with children. It is the process of identifying present and future risks and creating effective actions for their reduction.

It is not and is not intended to be a Health & Safety Audit. That is

the responsibility of the Prior/PP in compliance with Province Policy.

The first step is to establish 'The Context' and ask: *It there anything within the activity, the location, or among those who run the activity that could cause harm to a child?*

A proactive approach will already take care of these issue. The CSRA template contains a 'Good Practice Checklist', as well as a Sample Assessment Form.

Under Children First 2015 & Safeguarding Children 2016 it is a requirement that each church body working with children completes a CSRA for each ministry once a year. The template gives guidance on who completes the assessment, who can assist and who signs-off on completion.



Ministries are not static. They are evolving and the wrap around structures of each children's ministry needs to be reviewed annually. The Safeguarding Officer will run a Zoom workshop for all LSGs in September 2021 to address this new requirement.

Fr. John Hennebry (Provincial)

To quote from Saint Augustine:

“We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song.”

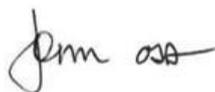


Safeguarding might be referred to as **A Ministry of Vigilant Presence.** Lockdown gave rise to its own challenges in this regard with an increase in the number of child protection reports made nationally.

However, the call of the Spirit is to return to a model of service where the Leader must be the humble servant of the community and a companion to all, especially the most vulnerable. An *Easter People* do not need the kind of local hierarchies we have suffered for so long.

Moving into the Season of Pentecost is to enter the Season of the Spirit. A time of change and transition. We need new blood, new ideas, new life. One aspect of that will be the election of a new Provincial in March 2022. A more significant aspect will be the renewal of our committees. Maybe YOU might consider helping us out there?

Very best wishes to you all.



Fethard Reflection

By Mary Healy

We missed the Spanish Flu
But on time for Corona

Wow, What a life it's been
Yes we truly went through many
transitions

Typically we can be termed
as 'Xennials'
a 'cross-over generation'
of people whose birth years
were in the 50's
had an analogue childhood, a digital
adulthood
And now we're "Seen All agers"

Our generation has lived through
and witnessed
so much and more in every
dimension of life.
Our generation has given a new
paradigm
to the word "CHANGE"

We thank God for this wonderful,
meaningful,
amazing rollercoaster life ...

Best wishes to all of you who are
from the
era, that was, that is and that will be
none such as "ours"

Lord, Let us continue to live
Our lives to the fullest
One day at a time.