



NEWSLETTER

FAREWELL TO ARCHBISHOP MARTIN



Archbishop Dermot Farrell took over as Archbishop of Dublin on 2 February 2021. While wishing Archbishop Farrell a very warm welcome, it is fitting that we mark Archbishop Martin's departure by expressing our admiration and gratitude for all that he has done for the people of Dublin.

Archbishop Martin is seen here speaking at the launch of the diocesan child safeguarding policy document in April 2011. Diarmuid Martin's commitment to making the Church in Dublin a safe and welcoming place for children and vulnerable persons defined who he was and what he represented to the people of Dublin. He understood the pain and trauma of those who had been abused by priests and religious or had experienced abuse in Church run institutions; and the disillusionment with, and disengagement from, the Church that so often results from such experiences.

Archbishop Martin did more than speak out about abuse in the Church. He listened to and spoke with victims/ survivors, and with their families, and he provided them with support. Much of his work of bringing healing and hope to those who had suffered was done quietly, away from the glare of publicity. Archbishop Martin recently paid tribute to the work of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service and thanked all those in the Diocese; priests, religious and lay people for their contribution to safeguarding.

While grateful for his kind words, we acknowledge that nothing would have been achieved without his leadership and support. Our greatest tribute to Archbishop Martin will be our determination to continue his work and we know that our new Archbishop will expect nothing less of us.

BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

We begin 2021 in the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service in very different circumstances than we began 2020. However, we have the same determination to help and support those who have suffered as a consequence of abuse and to work towards a Church that provides a safe and welcoming environment for children and vulnerable persons.

We said a sad goodbye to some colleagues and friends during 2020 and welcomed new members of the team. Lorraine Byrne, who worked with us in developing our work on safeguarding of vulnerable adults, left the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service when her contract ended in June. Later, Gerry Deegan, our Priest Support Coordinator since 2008, retired in August. Five people then left as part of the voluntary redundancy scheme introduced in the Diocese to help deal with the financial crisis brought about by the global pandemic. Clare Harwood and Matilda Chongwa left the vetting service. Julie McCullough, our Child Protection Officer since 2014, left in September. In December, we bade farewell to our administrators, Aileen Byrne and Geraldine (Ger) Tierney. Aileen had joined the service when it started in 2003 and Ger moved from Archbishop's House in 2007. Between them, they had 30 years' experience with CSPA. They were the heart of the service, central to all that was best of us. Our sorrow at losing so many of our colleagues and friends is matched by our gratitude to each and every one of them for the enormous contribution they made.

Three of the 2020 team remain: Vivienne Knight (Vetting Coordinator), Garry Kehoe (Training and Development Coordinator), and Andrew Fagan (Director). We are delighted to welcome two new members.



Deirdre Donnelly joined us from Tusla in October. Deirdre is a social worker with 20 years' experience in child protection. We have known Deirdre for many years as she worked with us in relation to a number of cases. Deirdre was always most obliging and helpful. She has had a less than ideal induction, given the current restrictions on movement and social contacts. Despite this, Deirdre has already established

herself as a valued member of the team. Deirdre's job title is Safeguarding and Support Officer and her role combines elements of the roles of our former colleagues, Gerry Deegan and Julie McCullough.



Noeleen Rooney is on loan to the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service from the Lourdes Office and is taking over the work done by Geraldine Tierney and Aileen Byrne. Noeleen has a wealth of experience as an administrator working in the private sector. Her experience with the Lourdes pilgrimages means she is very familiar with the Diocese and the people

working in it. This combination of knowledge and expertise, as well as her helpful and accommodating approach, makes Noeleen an ideal fit for the service. While Noeleen is, strictly speaking, on loan to CSPA, we are hoping that this will be a relatively long term arrangement!

Clearly, five people cannot do work formerly done by ten so we are making some changes. One of them is to reduce the amount of vetting we do on behalf of other organisations. We are currently negotiating a transfer of responsibility for some of the vetting we have done up to now to another body. CSPA will continue to do vetting for parishes, diocesan offices and other Church related organisations. We are reviewing our administrative procedures to explore whether we can simplify them and make them more efficient. Garry Kehoe will continue to work with the volunteer trainers to ensure we continue to roll out safeguarding training across the Diocese. He is exploring how we can make use of information technology both as a response to restrictions on social gatherings and as a means of making best use of available resources.

The changes being made are about making best possible use of the resources available to us. Our commitment to the work of safeguarding has not changed or been in any way diluted. We know that we can continue to rely on the assistance and support of our colleagues in the parishes and offices of the Diocese. This always was, and will continue to be, our most important resource.

'MOTHER 1'

Re: Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision Making Related to the Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick (1930 – 2017)

This report, published in November 2020, is an inquiry into who knew what and when about Theodore McCarrick's abusive activities. Fairly early on in the report (pages 37 to 47), the experiences of a woman referred to as 'Mother 1' are recounted. Her experience is as relevant today as it was then.

Mother 1 and her husband were deeply committed Catholics who were very involved with their local parish. They met McCarrick before he became a bishop and he befriended the family. He visited frequently and spent time with Mother 1's boys. He brought them on outings and then on overnight trips. At his insistence, the boys referred to him as 'Unk' or 'Uncle Ted'.

At first, Mother 1 was delighted with the attention McCarrick lavished on her boys. Then, she began to notice some things which caused her concern. He was only interested in boys, not girls. He held the children tight against him. She witnessed him stroking the inside of the thighs of two of her sons. Things came to a head when McCarrick insisted that one of her sons accompany him on a trip the boy did not want to go on. Mother 1 confronted McCarrick. He did not acknowledge anything untoward. However, his attitude to her changed. As she said: "All that charm in his interactions with me disappeared".

Mother 1 was clear that McCarrick's interest in her sons was sexual. She found out McCarrick was giving her sons alcohol and was clear that this was about lowering their inhibitions. However, she felt disempowered. Her husband did not support her. She did not want to do anything that could have negative consequences for her children. So, she wrote anonymously to the Papal Nuncio and some American cardinals about him. Efforts to find these letters were made as part of the inquiry but they were not found. There was no evidence that the concerns raised were acted on.

There are a number of issues raised by this story. One is about what people see when they witness inappropriate behaviour. The father of the children saw his boys having their inner thighs stroked by McCarrick

but did not see inappropriate behaviour, as his wife did. Later in the report, there is an incident at a dinner attended by a number of people at which a young priest was inappropriately touched by McCarrick. While there was recognition that something was not right about McCarrick's behaviour on that occasion, it does not appear to have been seen for what it was and nothing was done about it. If you do not see sexual abuse, you cannot stop it. While there is a danger of reading too much into an isolated incident, a pattern of inappropriate, boundary crossing behaviour such as that witnessed by Mother 1 has to raise concerns and lead to action.

From a child protection point of view, dealing with anonymous allegations and complaints is very difficult. It is rarely possible to take decisive action based solely on anonymous information. People have a right to their good name and this must be respected. However, information about child protection concerns is information that requires a response, no matter where it comes from. At the very least, other enquiries need to be made to try to establish whether there are grounds for concern that abuse may have occurred.

Finally, we are reminded – as we have been on countless occasions – of how powerful, abusive men (and it usually is men) can get away with sexually abusive behaviour because those they harm, or those who witness the harm they do, are disempowered. This is why it is so important for us to have services and structures in place for those who wish to voice their concerns and complaints.



CONTACTING THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION SERVICE

In keeping with government guidelines, the staff team are working from home. The main office number, 01 8360314, is diverted so that calls to the office will be picked up by a member of the team. If your call is not picked up immediately we will respond to any message you leave within one working day.

Vetting enquiries and applications can be submitted online to: garda.vetting@dublindiocese.ie