

Homily 33rd Sunday Year A 2020

At the request of Cardinal Nichols, I begin the mass this morning with his words to us all.

'Today we pray especially for all who have suffered abuse, as children or as vulnerable adults, and carry its scars throughout their lives. Many of their stories are told in the IICSA Report. We pray for them in the pain they bear.

We pray too for courage and guidance for our bishops and religious leaders, and for those who work in Safeguarding, that the responses we give will be just and healing. We ask pardon for those past responses that now are seen to have been so inadequate.

We place before the Lord this brokenness which marks so many lives and the life of the Church.'

Although the pandemic has curtailed formation concerning safeguarding, I wish to reassure you that the Diocese has worked extremely hard to form her priests and ministers in safeguarding for several years now. It has put into place safeguards and sought to improve them whenever errors come to light not just in the Church but nationally. The IICSA report is available to be read on line. It provides an opportunity for us to recognise our own brokenness and failings as well as the utmost importance of the care and support we give to others especially the most vulnerable.

Jesus' parable of the talents today is a clear reminder that we cannot sit back and do nothing, or seek ways to blame others for their failings, or ask what are they going to do about it. The real question for each of us is *what are we going to do about making society not just a safer place but a happy place to be.* The pandemic has called us to reach out to the vulnerable and isolated which we have often done admirably. This must continue and grow stronger, once Covid has been tamed.

Remember, when we eventually face our maker as we will all do, each of us will be asked what have YOU done with your life; not what others have done or not done. What have YOU done??

We need not just shield or safeguard society against all evils of abuse but help create a society that is warmed by love and affirmation, where everyone without exception is welcomed, supported, affirmed and loved and who in their turn wants to do the same.

We are made in the image of God. Let us create a society that reflects that image - an image of love!!!

Khalil Gibran: Safeguarding the rights of others is the most noble and beautiful purpose of a human being.

Pope Francis: The "holy, faithful People of God in its daily silence, in many forms and ways continues to demonstrate and attest with 'stubborn' hope that the Lord never abandons but sustains the constant and, in so many cases, painful devotion of his children".

Clovis G. Chappell: We will never bring in the Kingdom by simply seeking to save an adult generation. We must give God a chance at the children or the cause of righteousness is going to be defeated. But if we will save the child, we will surely save the world.