

Testimonials from Young People who engage in youth activities in our Diocese.

I am a leader in the parish youth group and in the Faith Friends programme. I really enjoy being part of the Church in this way because I am able to understand and deepen my own faith.

It makes me feel part of the Community.

I would like to be a part of their Confirmation journey and beyond

I enjoy helping with the Confirmation kids, because I remember what it is like to make my Confirmation.

I hope that I can encourage the young people to take their faith seriously.

KANDLE
KILDARE AND LEIGHLIN DIOCESE

Safeguarding Sunday 22nd February 2026

Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Abuse

Friday February 20th 2026

(1st Friday of Lent 2026) -

Our annual Holy Hour for Survivors of Abuse was held in the Cathedral Parish in Carlow. Thanks to all who attended and participated in the service.

Candle of Atonement Prayer

Lord, forgive us our many sins.

We grieve and repent with all our hearts for having offended you, for our great failings and neglect of the young and vulnerable.

We place all of those who have been hurt by the Church in any way into your loving hands and under the protection of Our Blessed Mother.

Lord, bring peace to their broken lives and show us all the way out of darkness and into the light of your Word.

May we as the people of God be more fully human, more fully Christ-like and more fully your people, that we may see the errors of the past and go forward with renewed hope and faith in Christ and in our Church.

Amen.

Support for Survivors of Abuse

Towards Healing

An independent organisation providing free professional support for people who have experienced institutional, clerical or religious abuse in Ireland. They provide counselling for survivors and their families.

Their helpline is open:
Tuesday to Friday 9am -5pm

Freephone: 1800 303 416.

Hearing-impaired Text Line

Number: 085 8022 859.

Email: info@towardshealing.ie

Web: www.towardshealing.ie



Towards Peace

Provides spiritual support in a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.

Tel: 01 505 3028 / 086 771 0533.

Email: towardspeace@iecon.ie

Web: www.towardspeace.ie



Message from Bishop Denis Nulty

Sunday, February 22, is Diocesan Safeguarding Sunday. It is the first Sunday of Lent and appropriately so, as we enter the Penitential Season and seek forgiveness for past failings. In his address at the January Consistory Pope Leo XIV reminded all that “abuse itself causes a deep wound, which may last a lifetime; but often the scandal in the Church is that the door was closed and victims were not welcomed or accompanied with the closeness of authentic pastors”. This year we have intentionally linked the ‘Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Abuse’ on Friday, February 20 with ‘Safeguarding Sunday’ two days later.

The National Child Safeguarding Policy for our Church is called ‘A Safe and Welcoming Church’ and that is what our diocese is and our parishes are, a safe and welcoming Church. The fact that ‘Safeguarding Sunday’ has become such a regular part of our Diocesan and Parish life, demonstrates how the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults has been so well embedded into every area of the life of our diocese, its 56 parishes and 117 faith communities.

Safeguarding Sunday is once again an opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the years of dedication and work by so many to ensure that Kildare & Leighlin Diocese is a safe place for children and all who work with them. It’s an opportunity to thank all who today ensure safeguarding is so well embedded in our diocesan culture, Ailish Higgins, our Director of Safeguarding, currently on maternity leave, Michele Hughes, our Acting

Designated Liaison Person, the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, our Parish Safeguarding Representatives, our priests, our deacons and our people, particularly the many who volunteer at parish level, ensuring the life and vitality of their faith community.

As ever, on my parish visits, I encourage ministry with children and young people, this is an essential part of the mission of the Church. Where altar serving, youth choirs, Sunday School have returned I welcome them warmly; where they haven’t for whatever reason, once again I encourage their early return. The life of a parish is often defined by the active engagement of young people in that parish. Safeguarding Sunday is a reassurance to all that being involved in the parish is governed by best practices in safeguarding.

Every blessing & thanks,

+Denis Nulty
Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin



Training

A special word of thanks to our Diocesan Safeguarding Trainers, Trish O’Neill & Ailish Higgins who facilitated 10 training events in 2025. A total number of 177 church personnel, including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers trained in 2025.

The diocesan safeguarding committee joined the Ossory safeguarding

committee and attended training facilitated by the National Board in Kilkenny 17th November 2025. The training focused on the role of safeguarding committees in the context of our National Church policy and standards for safeguarding children.

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact:

Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Ailish Higgins

Tel: 085 802 1633 **Email:** dlp@kandle.ic

Deputy DLPs: Ms. Michele Hughes **Tel:** 086 171 0643

Fr. Michéal Murphy **Tel:** 057 867 9302

Contact details for all civil authorities are on display at the back of all churches in the diocese and available on the website www.kandle.ic





Youth Participation

Safeguarding Checklist for Parishes Displayed in all Church Porches

- The Kildare & Leighlin Child Safeguarding Statement Poster dated 2024 and signed by Bishop Nulty (please remove ALL old statement posters, these are now obsolete).
- Child Friendly Safeguarding Poster
- Parish webcam and CCTV notice/poster
- Towards Healing Poster

In the Sacristy

- Sacristy Register – Spine bound book to be signed by all who enter the sacristy (to be used even when no altar servers present, available for purchase from Faith Development Services).
- Celebret Request Poster
- Codes of Behaviour (one for adults, and one for servers where applicable).

Local Safeguarding Representatives

- Have completed recruitment process and full diocesan safeguarding training
- Have clear role description (leaflets available on role of LSR)
- Have completed vetting process.
- Be aware of DLP contact details.
- Be aware of reporting procedures for allegations of abuse.
- Support Parish priest with ensuring all activities with children/young people and vulnerable adults are in line with Church Policy.
- Support Parish Priest with completion of the annual safeguarding self-audit.

Staff & Volunteers working with children / young people

- Have completed recruitment process and appropriate diocesan safeguarding training.
- Have completed vetting process.
- Ensure consent forms are completed.
- Maintain a record of attendance for all activities involving under 18s.
- Codes of behaviour in place for adult leaders and children/young people.
- Risk Assessment for activities involving under 18s to be completed annually, sample document on diocesan website.

Parish Safeguarding Audits

Annual safeguarding audit forms were circulated to all parishes on **8th January 2026**. To be completed and returned to Bishop's House by **12th March 2026**.

The Final Report for 2024's Audit is available on the diocesan website: www.kandle.ie/safeguarding

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland – Biannual conference

The NBSCCCI held their biannual conference from 3rd – 5th September 2025 titled: Towards a Restorative and Transitional Justice model of engaging with victims and survivors in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The event aimed to enhance the understanding we all have of how we must engage in a just and restorative way with those who have suffered harm in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

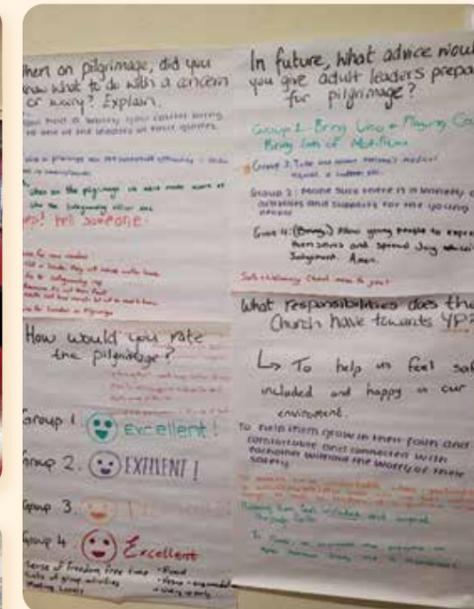
Our diocesan director of safeguarding and DLP attended the event and shared valuable feedback with our diocesan safeguarding committee. The learning from the conference will help guide our practice going forward.

Special thanks to the National Board for organising and hosting the event.



Following the 2024 launch of the Church's Child Safeguarding Policy, Ailish Higgins, our Diocesan Director of Safeguarding met with young people from the diocese to ask them "What does a Safe & Welcoming Church mean to you?"

Thanks to all the children and young people who took part in these sessions and were open and honest about their experience of parish life. Thanks too to their parents, the group leaders and parish priests who supported the facilitation of these groups.



Youth Pilgrimage to Rome



John Paul II Awards



Clane Confirmation class



Amadeus



Christmas

