



Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS Bishop of Motherwell

Pastoral Letter – August 2015.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Publication of the McLellan Report – 18th August 2015.

On 25th November 2013, the Bishops Conference of Scotland announced that Dr Andrew McLellan would chair a Commission whose remit was to review the suitability and robustness of the Safeguarding procedures and protocols of the Catholic Church in Scotland.

Today, 18th August 2015, Dr McLellan published the Commission's Report. It contains many recommendations, eight principle ones, and will present challenges for the Church in the future. The Bishops of Scotland have agreed unanimously to accept these recommendations to ensure that our Safeguarding standards are as high as possible.

At Mass on 18th August in St Andrew's Cathedral, Glasgow, Archbishop Tartaglia acknowledged the publication of the Report and offered a first response. This included an apology to all survivors and victims for the abuse inflicted on them by clergy and religious of the Church. The Church has produced a leaflet entitled "A Response to the McLellan Report", which includes the text of this apology along with information on the Report's recommendations and an expression of our intent to respond to all that is asked of us. The leaflet is to be distributed at all Sunday Masses on the weekend of 22nd/23rd August in all the parishes in Scotland. Please make sure you get one and pass it on to others not present at Mass. The full text of the Report can be read on or downloaded from the McLellan Commission website (www.mclellancommission.org.uk). We acknowledge the good work done by all who served on the Commission and all who contributed to its findings.

One of the psalms in today's Office spoke of "the anger and fury of God" – not a pleasant thought but one which is not misplaced when we realise the pain and damage caused to children and other vulnerable people by various forms of abuse. Jesus used strong words also against anyone who would harm the little ones – "But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round his neck" (Mk 9:42). If we know survivors of abuse let us reach out to them with compassion, and let us support every effort that is made to rid our Church of this scourge. Let us pray today therefore for all who have been wounded and for all striving to make our Church a safe and wholesome place for everyone who comes seeking God's mercy and blessing.

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

+ Joseph Toal

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