

Apology Text of Archbishop Tartaglia – McLellan Report:

On 24th November 2013, the Bishops' Conference of Scotland announced that it had commissioned an independent review into the suitability and robustness of the safeguarding procedures and protocols of the Catholic Church in Scotland. The Reverend Dr. Andrew McLellan, a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, was invited by the Bishops to lead the review.

Earlier today, 18th August 2015, Dr. McLellan published his Commission's Report. I would like to express the gratitude of the Bishops to him and his fellow Commissioners for their Report. The Report is a detailed and substantial document, the product of almost two years' work by many able and committed people. It gives the Catholic Church in Scotland a vision and a programme to strengthen the work of safeguarding and respond to the needs of survivors.

The Bishops of Scotland have agreed unanimously to accept the Report's recommendations in full. We will act on every recommendation the Report makes and redouble our efforts to ensure that safeguarding standards are as high as possible.

In the course of this weekend, information will be distributed throughout all our parishes providing information on the findings of the Commission and how the Church will now respond.

Before that, however, I want to act today on the first of the Report's main recommendations. The first recommendation calls for the Bishops' Conference of Scotland to make a public apology to all victims and survivors of abuse perpetrated within the Catholic Church in Scotland.

As the President of the Bishops' Conference, and on behalf of all the Bishops of Scotland, I want to offer a profound apology to all those who have been harmed and who have suffered in any way as a result of actions by anyone within the Catholic Church.

Child abuse is an horrific crime. That this abuse should have been carried out within the Church, and by priests and religious, takes that abuse to another level. Such actions are inexcusable and intolerable. The harm the perpetrators of abuse have caused is first and foremost to their victims, but it extends far beyond them, to their families and friends, as well as to the church and wider society.

I would like to assure the survivors of abuse that the Catholic Bishops of Scotland are shamed and pained by what you have suffered. We say sorry. We ask forgiveness.

Since 2007 we have had a comprehensive programme of safeguarding in place. In a spirit of openness and transparency, with our dedicated staff and volunteers across the country, whom we thank for the time and effort they give, we commit ourselves to the renewal and up-grading of our safeguarding structures, processes and protocols as recommended by the McLellan Report.

We commit ourselves anew to the welfare of children, young people and the vulnerable in all our communities. In a spirit of faith, hope and repentance, we renew our commitment to serve all God's people.

And I wish to repeat what I said when the McLellan Commission was announced:
"We recognize the trauma and pain that victims and survivors of abuse have suffered and we are committed to providing for them both justice and healing."

St Andrew. Cathedral, Glasgow
Tuesday 18th August 2015.