
Abuse: UK Bishops' Conference, "We undertake to listen to the victims and support them on their journey of healing"

"We invite anyone who has experienced abuse to come forward, no matter how long ago the abuse took place. We undertake to listen carefully to them with open heart and mind and support them on a journey of healing". In a statement released at the end of their Plenary, which began last Monday, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales made this appeal to abuse victims, while also offering their apologies and promising them better safeguarding structures. Indeed, this week the UK Bishops' Conference looked at and discussed the findings, mainly via remote meetings, of the independent inquiry into abuse in the Church released ten days ago. The Bishops also examined the findings of the "Elliott Review", an internal investigation entrusted to an expert in this field, Ian Elliott. It is precisely he who is credited with proposing two new key recommendations for rethinking the abuse prevention structures that the Church has tried to put in place since early 2000. The "Elliott Review" calls for the establishment of a national court to address "canonical matters connected to clergy discipline and canonical offences". It also recommends the establishment of a single safeguarding body called "Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency" tasked with monitoring compliance with safeguarding standards and coordinating everyone involved in child protection.

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