



MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MARCUS

To Parishes and Religious Communities in the Diocese of Leeds

8th April 2022

The news of Fr Patrick Smythe's conviction on 7th April 2022 at Leeds Crown Court for sexual touching of minors in the late 1970s and early 1980s has caused shock, sorrow and shame to me, as it has for many throughout the Catholic community. This news will be felt particularly keenly by those parishes where Fr Smythe had worked within our diocese.

Our first thoughts and prayers must always be for the survivors and their families, whose courage in coming forward has brought these grave crimes to justice. Please pray for the survivors as they try to find healing after the suffering they have lived with during their lives because of these offences and following the trauma of the investigation and trial.

After hearing the information that has come from the trial and the account given by the judge in the sentencing at the end of the court case, I am conscious that there will be anger, sadness and a range of conflicting thoughts and emotions among the members of our diocesan family at this news about one of our priests. I am confident, though, that you will find consolation in your faith, your parish community and from the spiritual and pastoral care provided by your parish clergy.

As we enter Holy Week on Palm Sunday and recall the passion and death of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we remember that the darkness of His tomb will be transformed by the light of His Resurrection, and that fear and despair will be banished by the hope and dawn of a new day. We pray especially that the light of Christ, the bright Sun of Justice, will bring renewal to the life of all victims and survivors of abuse.

Should you have any support needs or safeguarding concerns regarding the distressing information following from this court case, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, Ms Suzanne Mitchell, Email: safeguarding@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or Tel: 07515 598523.

Please be assured that all who are affected in any way by this situation, are in my prayers: commended to the compassionate care of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who brings healing to the broken hearted and to the loving intercession of Our Lady of Unfailing Help.

✠ **Marcus Stock**
Bishop of Leeds