

CARING SAFELY FOR OTHERS



PASTORAL STANDARDS AND SAFE CONDUCT IN MINISTRY

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FOREWORD

I welcome this fine document which sets out and promotes clear Pastoral Standards for our ministry as priests. I thank all who have contributed to its development and to the richness of its contents. It is a most welcome contribution to ensuring that the Catholic Church in England and Wales continues to strive for the highest standards in its ministry and outreach, especially in its care of those who are young or vulnerable. Our work of safeguarding is never done, and this document is a major contribution to that endeavour.

The Pastoral Standards presented here arise from the mandate given by the Lord to every ordained minister. They do not come from 'outside', from another set of standards which are to be imposed on the nature of priestly ministry. The outlook, expectations, and requirements contained in this document spring from the Church's own understanding of the gifts entrusted to her and how they are to be employed. With equal clarity, this document makes plain that which is simply not acceptable, that which is lax practice, and that which is all too often absent from the daily disciplines of good pastoral care. This document requires prayerful study and reflection. Indeed, that study and reflection is required of every one of us as a prerequisite of our ministry.

In recent years various documents have been produced, here and abroad, outlining the behaviour expected of ordained ministers and those who work closely with them. Many are helpful indeed. But this document, 'Caring Safely for Others', is now presented with the full authority of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and is therefore immediately applicable to every cleric, religious or diocesan, working in any of the parishes or ecclesiastical institutions within the territory of this Conference.

I treasure another conviction about 'Caring Safely for Others'. In my mind, it's outstanding quality is its rootedness in our Catholic teaching, tradition and legislation. It is a fully ecclesial document. In this, 'Caring for Others' brings a new depth to our work of Safeguarding. In it we see with a thoroughness not previously achieved. We see, unambiguously, how our safeguarding responsibilities are intrinsic to our baptism, to our vocation, to our ordained ministry. I can see how this document will provide a further building block in our response to the scandal of abusive relationships within the community of the Catholic Church, which have damaged so many innocent people. The formation and training that will be constructed from this document will make clear that our work of safeguarding, its supervision and its development, must be seen as an essential part of the proclamation of the Gospel. This aspiration has often been expressed in recent years, but this document shows how it can indeed be fulfilled.

I commend 'Caring Safely for Others' to the Catholic community at large. I present it to all clerics as essential for their ministry. And I unhesitatingly include myself in that number.

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Archbishop of Westminster
President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales*



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SECTION I: Introduction

“By virtue of our sharing in Christ’s royal mission ...we must be inspired and distinguished by a specific attitude: we must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible ...for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good. We need then to show care for all life and for the life of everyone.”¹

To ‘care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible’ is at the heart of the Church’s responsibility to safeguard all the people she encounters in the exercise of her mission, particularly those who are most at risk of abuse² or exploitation in any form.

It is only recently in the life of the Church that the use of the specific vocabulary of ‘safeguarding’ has been used to identify an integral part of what it means to exercise care for others in pastoral ministry. Yet this command of God is found throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The mandate is given to protect, care for, and safeguard the most vulnerable of his people; it is given, particularly, to those appointed as shepherds and leaders of God’s people.

The Lord Jesus gives us this command in this dreadful warning: *“So he called a little child to him whom he set among them. Then he said, ‘In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. Anyone who welcomes one little child like this in my name welcomes me. But anyone who is the downfall of one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck’.”³*

¹ *Evangelium Vitae* §87, Encyclical Letter: *To the Bishops Priests and Deacons Men and Women religious lay Faithful and all People of Good Will on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*, Pope John Paul II, 1995

² For the purposes of this document, ‘abuse’ should be understood as defined by civil legislation in England and Wales, whether the abuse is of a minor or an adult at risk.

³ Matthew 18:2-6. The common interpretation of Matthew 18:1-14 in modern scholarship contends that this passage is a warning to the disciples to prevent them from leading a fellow disciple or new convert away from the faith. Although this may well be one interpretation, there is also scholarly reason to believe that Jesus is presenting eschatological warnings of divine retribution against any disciple who scandalized children through sexual abuse or exposure, rather than welcoming them and providing for their needs. (Cf. Lorne Zelyck, *Matthew 18,1-14 and the Exposure and Sexual Abuse of Children in the Roman World*, *Biblica* 98, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, 2017)

Christ our Lord expressed to his disciples the paramount importance of protecting and safeguarding his 'little ones'. Christ's 'little ones' are in one sense his disciples but they are also all those who, because of their vulnerability, are at risk of being abused or exploited; they are children and adults at risk.

For the purpose of this document, a '**child**' is defined as "*a person under the age of 18*"⁴. Throughout this document therefore, 'child' means 'child and young person' and 'children' means 'children and young people'. An '**adult at risk**' is defined as any person aged 18 years or over who: "*is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; has needs for care and support, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it*"⁵.

Our Lord declares that one of the gravest sins is to cause one of his 'little ones' to stumble, to cause them to lose faith. The sexual abuse of a child or an adult at risk constitutes this gravest of sins⁶. It is a sin which destroys the trust and innocence of a child and betrays the trust and faith of an adult who has placed their trust in another person by virtue of that person's office, position of power or their relationship with them.

The mandate to protect and 'care for the other' is also given in Christ's commission to St Peter, and through him to the Apostles and their successors, to "*Look after my sheep*"⁷; that is, to exercise the office of shepherd and to safeguard the members of the Lord's flock.

The call to safeguard the lives of others is the vocation of all members of the Church: "*Our Lord Jesus Christ calls every believer to be a shining example of virtue, integrity and holiness. All of us, in fact, are called to give concrete witness of faith in Christ in our lives and, in particular, in our relationship with others. The crimes of sexual abuse offend Our Lord, cause physical, psychological and spiritual damage to the victims and harm the community of the faithful. In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church, so that personal sanctity and moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church's mission.*"⁸

At the same time, the responsibility to follow closely the command of Christ to safeguard his 'little ones' and look after his sheep must be observed, in particular, by those "*chosen by God to be pastoral leaders of his People, and ...all those who, in various ways, assume ministries in*

⁴ As defined by the law in England (Children Acts 1989 and 2004) and Wales (Section 3 of the Social Services and Well-being [Wales] Act 2014). The universal law of the Church also defines a child ('minor') as: "*any person under the age of 18, or who is considered by law to be the equivalent*" (*Vos estis Lux Mundi*, Art.1, §2, a, Apostolic Letter promulgated by Pope Francis, 7th May 2019).

⁵ As defined by the law in the Care Act 2014 (England) and Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 (Wales). The universal law of the Church also defines an adult at risk of abuse ('**vulnerable person**') as: "*any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence*". Cf. *Vos estis Lux Mundi*, Art.1, §2, b.

⁶ *Vos estis Lux Mundi*, Art.1, §1, a, ii

⁷ John 21:16

⁸ *Vos estis Lux Mundi* (Introduction)

*the Church*⁹. Bishops and those who through sacramental ordination share in the ministry of the bishop, that is, priests and deacons, have a responsibility to imitate the Good Shepherd and exercise their ministry in a way which protects, safeguards and cares for all the members of his flock but especially children and adults at risk; they must “*prevent and combat these crimes that betray the trust of the faithful*”¹⁰.

⁹ *Vos estis Lux Mundi* (Introduction)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

SECTION II: Aim and Objective

In 2007 the Cumberlege Commission Report, 'Safeguarding with Confidence – Keeping Children and Vulnerable Adults Safe in the Catholic Church', had recommended Codes of Conduct for all clergy, non-clergy religious and lay people working within the Church. Codes of Conduct have been provided for non-clergy religious and lay people who work in the service of the Church, including volunteers.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales recognised that the 'code' which governs the conduct and all aspects of the life and ministry of each member of the clergy¹¹ is the Code of Canon Law. The Code provides the "*positive and holistic context for a set of behaviours*"¹² which support the conduct, standards and spiritual growth in the ministry of each bishop, priest and deacon; it also provides the juridic context for holding members of the clergy to account for their conduct.

Rooted in the Code of Canon Law and the teaching of the Church, the Church's 'Directories'¹³ for each degree of the Sacrament of Holy Orders also set out the principal doctrinal, disciplinary and pastoral expectations for the ministry of clergy.

Although the Code of Canon Law and the Directories provide the principles which govern the conduct of clergy, there remains a need for further guidance, training and ongoing formation¹⁴ concerning the conduct of clergy specifically in relation to their ministry of safeguarding.

The aim of this document is to ensure that, in the exercise of their 'care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible' and the responsibility to safeguard Christ's 'little ones', all clergy who exercise ministry in England and Wales are familiar with the best safe pastoral standards and practices, and that these are conducted within appropriate boundaries, often referred to as 'professional boundaries'.

This document does not attempt to address all of the pastoral standards and practices that need to be understood and followed in all circumstances of the ordained ministry, i.e. prayer, liturgy, administration, etc. Rather, it presents a concise framework for the principles of safe conduct, rooted in the Code of Canon Law and the magisterium, which foster and promote integrity specifically in the ministry of safeguarding exercised by clergy. From these principles, it enunciates some of the pastoral standards which ensure that the conduct and behaviour of clergy, both in public and private life, safeguards

¹¹ For the purpose of this document, 'clergy' includes all secular (diocesan) clergy, clerical members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and clergy from abroad or other jurisdictions working in England and Wales

¹² *Safeguarding with Confidence – Keeping Children and Vulnerable Adults Safe in the Catholic Church* §2.35, The Cumberlege Commission Report, 2007

¹³ Cf. *Apostolorum Successores (Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops)*, Congregation for Bishops, 2004; *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, Congregation for Clergy, 2013; and, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998

¹⁴ Cf. *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*: "...each priest must feel encouraged to assume responsibility for his own formation", he is the "first agent of his own formation", (§80); *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, §§63-82; *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops*, §49

others, particularly children and adults at risk; it is not a *“list of forbidden behaviours but an aid to enable them to preserve their dignity whilst respecting the dignity of those with whom they work and serve”*¹⁵.

For the majority of deacons, priests and bishops, these principles will not be new or unfamiliar but will give an explicit expression to the ministry of safeguarding they seek to exercise already. The objective of this document is, therefore, to assist all clergy in ensuring that the pastoral ministry provided for Christ’s ‘little ones’ is being conducted safely and responsibly; it should assure them that they can exercise their ministry with *“freedom and energy... It is about ways in which they preserve their dignity whilst respecting the dignity of those with whom they work and serve”*¹⁶.

¹⁵ *Safeguarding with Confidence* §2.34

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

SECTION III: The Ministry of Safeguarding and the Safeguarding of Ministry

By virtue of the pastoral office held as servants and shepherds within Christ's Church, those who are ordained as deacons, priests and bishops are given immense trust by many people; they are given also a unique welcome and a privileged access into the lives of children, adults, families and institutions.

With this trust, welcome and access, comes the corresponding principle for each ordained minister to:

1. Respect Human Dignity – respect the dignity of each person as someone who is created "*in the image and likeness of God*"¹⁷;
2. Defend, Protect and Safeguard - to defend, protect and safeguard the sacred value of all "*human life from its very beginning until its end*"¹⁸, particularly the lives of those who are vulnerable and at risk;
3. Communicate with Care - to communicate and model all thoughts, words and actions on the person of Jesus Christ¹⁹ and exercise the sacred ministry faithfully²⁰, responsibly²¹ and sensitively²².

These principles form not only the basis for the conduct by which all clergy must exercise their ministry of safeguarding but also the pastoral standards which form the foundation for the safeguarding of their ministry. The cultivation and practice of pastoral standards safeguards the ministry of the ordained; these standards generate trust and make safe the welcome and access given to clergy by those they serve.

Because the ordained ministry is itself the fruit of sacramental grace given in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, every aspect of the exercise of ministry should be understood as a response to the "*call to ministry and priestly life as a continuous configuration to Christ*"²³ and all its actions "*expressed in fervent prayer, in integrity of life, in the pastoral charity of a ministry tirelessly spending itself for the salvation of the faithful*"²⁴.

The ministry exercised by deacons, priests and bishops is, therefore, a sacramental vocation and not a professional career; it cannot be fulfilled by the observance and application of a specific set of knowledge and skills alone. Nevertheless, within the wider community and in public society, there is the expectation that clergy conduct themselves

¹⁷ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 768, §2; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1701 to 1709

¹⁸ Cf. *Evangelium Vitae* §2

¹⁹ Cf. *Apostolorum Successores* §2, §33, §43 & §97, Congregation for Bishops, 2004; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* §15, Pope St Paul VI, 1965; *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community* §12, Congregation for Clergy, 2002; *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* §8, §38, §45, §47, §49, & §69, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998

²⁰ *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 276, §2, 1°

²¹ *Ibid.* Canons 285, §1 & §2;

²² *Ibid.* Canon 287, §1

²³ *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis: The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, Introduction §3, Congregation for the Clergy, 2016

²⁴ *Homily Solemn at the conclusion of the World 'Retreat' for Priests*, Pope John Paul II, Rome, 9th October 1984

‘professionally’ in the exercise of their ministry²⁵; that is, act and live in a way which correlates to the responsibilities and characteristics of their vocation.

Similarly, although bishops, priests and deacons do not hold public office, they do hold ecclesiastical offices and exercise pastoral ministries which are public in nature²⁶. Holders of public office are “accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office”²⁷. In the same way, clergy must be prepared to be held accountable for their conduct and aspire to observe the highest standards of behaviour in the exercise of their ministry.

The reason for this aspiration is that the standards for the exercise of the ordained ministry are derived from the divine law of love²⁸, from the mandate for ministry received from Christ at ordination²⁹, and from a vocation which places “a special obligation to seek holiness”³⁰ on those who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders to live in a way which is conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ³¹. Moreover, the efficacy of their ministry is “possible only with the grace of the Holy Spirit”³².

The ministry of safeguarding must therefore, like all pastoral ministry, be rooted in prayer³³. Together with this prayer comes the need to make an honest examination of the way ordained ministry is conducted. Making an examination of conscience on personal conduct in the daily course of ministry should be already a regular feature in the spiritual life of each member of the clergy³⁴. To ensure that care for others in pastoral ministry is conducted safely and is observed in accordance with safeguarding norms, the following section ‘Pastoral Standards and Safe Practices in the Conduct of Ministry’ is presented as a guide and framework to assist bishops, priests and deacons to exercise ministry in a way which always safeguards Christ’s ‘little ones’ and safeguards the integrity of the ordained ministry.

²⁵ Cf. *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* §96

²⁶ Cf. *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* §62 & §66, Congregation for Clergy, 2013

²⁷ *The Seven Principles of Public Life*, Committee on Standards in Public Life, UK Government, 1995 (The 2013 report of the Committee states that “The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services”).

²⁸ Matthew 22:37-40

²⁹ Cf. *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* §336, Pope Benedict XVI, 1995

³⁰ *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 276 §1

³¹ Cf. *Apostolorum Successores* §2, §33, §43 & §97; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* §15, Pope St Paul VI, 1965; *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community* §12, Congregation for Clergy, 2002; *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* §8, §38, §45, §47, §49, & §69, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998

³² *Vos estis Lux Mundi* (Introduction)

³³ Cf. *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* §49 to §53

³⁴ Cf. *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* §50 & §94; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* §18, Pope St Paul VI, 1965; *Pastores dabo vobis* §6, Pope St John Paul II, 1992

SECTION IV: Pastoral Standards and Safe Practices in the Conduct of Ministry

With the trust we receive as ordained ministers, as well as the welcome and access we are given into the lives of those we serve, comes the overall responsibility to conduct our ministry in a way that is always faithful to Christ. This means that the pastoral standards and the safe practices integral to our ministry must be known and understood, as well as adhered to and modelled in our behaviour. The following are not exhaustive but are among the most important:

1. Respect Human Dignity

With the immense trust we receive, comes the duty to respect the dignity of each person as someone who is created in the image and likeness of God. This principle entails that we adhere to specific pastoral standards and safe practices in the conduct of our safeguarding ministry, namely to:

- 1.1 Exercise a particular care and concern for all Christ's 'little ones' and for those we encounter in our ministry whose lives are affected by any form of abuse. This requires that we:
 - a. Promote and uphold the dignity, safety, health and wellbeing of children and adults at risk.
 - b. Try to see, and conduct, all of our safeguarding ministry with the heart of Christ and through the eyes of victims and survivors of abuse, and the experience of their families.
 - c. Pray for the victims and survivors of abuse, and for their families.
- 1.2 Observe and comply with the safeguarding principles and standards, policies and procedures adopted for use by the Catholic Church in England and Wales. This requires that we:
 - a. Fulfil our personal responsibility to complete and understand the mandatory safeguarding training provided by the Catholic Church in England and Wales.
 - b. Maintain our knowledge and competence of good safeguarding practice through participation in the ongoing formation and training³⁵ provided by the Church and, where necessary or appropriate³⁶, by other safeguarding agencies.
 - c. Become cognisant with the causes and signs of child abuse³⁷ and the abuse of

³⁵ *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: "...the proper foundation and original motivation for ongoing formation is contained in the dynamism of the sacrament of holy orders", (§70); "...it is the priest himself, the individual priest, who is the person primarily responsible in the Church for ongoing formation. Truly each priest has the duty, rooted in the sacrament of holy orders, to be faithful to the gift God has given him and to respond to the call for daily conversion which comes with the gift itself", (§79)

³⁶ Additional safeguarding training may be required in the exercise of particular ministries or chaplaincies, e.g. universities, schools, hospitals, prisons, etc.

³⁷ Child abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual criminal offences, as well as neglect, of a child.

adults at risk³⁸, and the steps to be taken for their protection.

d. Immediately follow the applicable reporting procedures if abuse or neglect is suspected, observed or alleged.

1.3 Acknowledge and be mindful of the position of trust which we hold, the ‘power’ which many people attach to our status as clergy, and the authority which we exercise as an ordained minister. This requires that we:

a. Never abuse the immense trust³⁹ that is placed in us.

b. Never abuse our authority or status as clergy but always “*strive not to be served but to serve*”.⁴⁰

c. Demonstrate an exemplary respect for everyone we encounter.

1.4 Recognise that, particularly in our relationships with children and adults at risk, the position of trust which we hold and the authority which we exercise as an ordained minister requires us to be especially diligent in safeguarding their care and welfare. This requires that we:

a. Act with cognisance of the inequalities, the imbalance of ‘power’, and the risks that can accompany our relationship as a member of the clergy with any person but particularly in our relationships with children and adults at risk, and ensure that all our actions safeguard and serve their wellbeing.

1.5 Respect and maintain the boundaries appropriate to our relationships with every person in pastoral ministry, irrespective of their age or condition in life. This requires that we:

a. Observe proper spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries⁴¹ in every aspect of our conduct and in the exercise of our ministry.

b. Act only in those ways which are within our competence as clergy and any professional qualifications we hold which relate to the exercise of our ministry.

³⁸ Abuse of adults at risk includes: physical abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory abuse, organisational or institutional abuse, neglect or acts of omission, self-neglect. As well as grave moral offenses, many of these types of abuse are also criminal offences and should be treated as such. Clergy, in the course of their ministry, often come into contact with people with care and support needs; it is important that they are able to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators of abuse.

³⁹ Abuse of this trust by clergy is sometimes referred to as ‘clericalism’. Clericalism is expressed in actions, words and attitudes which betray and abuse the trust placed in us as clergy; it is inattention to the dynamics of power, or equally abuse of the dynamics of power, within the Church. Cf. *Letter to the People of God*, Pope Francis, 20th August 2018: “*To say ‘no’ to abuse is to say an emphatic ‘no’ to all forms of clericalism.*”

⁴⁰ Mark 10:45

⁴¹ These ‘boundaries’ promote the well-being of the people to whom a member of the clergy ministers as well as of the member of the clergy himself. Boundaries create a safe, transparent, accountable and predictable environment; they help to establish clear roles and expectations, and serve to protect and preserve the integrity of relationships in ministry.

- c. Make sure that our natural response to want to reach out and comfort those who are suffering or in distress is not repressed but is manifested as an appropriate expression of our care and support, and which prioritises the consent and needs of the recipient not the desire to give it.
 - d. Avoid in our words and actions any suggestion that we are seeking or initiating emotional or sexual intimacy, coercing affection or manifesting personal favouritism.
 - e. Observe the boundaries between a pastoral relationship and friendship⁴².
- 1.6 Respect our own dignity and needs, attend to the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral aspects of our need for ongoing formation in ministry, cultivate our spiritual and intellectual life, and have care for our physical health and emotional well-being with the conviction that the more effectively we live a mature human life, the more fully enriched will our pastoral ministry to God's people. This requires that we:
- a. Maintain our closeness and friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ⁴³.
 - b. Maintain the relational and social dimension of our lives with family⁴⁴ and friends⁴⁵.
 - c. Avoid becoming isolated in our ministry by maintaining and fostering the bonds of fraternity with other clergy in our deanery, diocese and the wider Church⁴⁶.
 - d. Ensure we take sufficient relaxation and rest⁴⁷.
 - e. Continue to nourish our intellectual life through further study⁴⁸.
 - f. Collaborate with other clergy⁴⁹ and the laity⁵⁰ in the exercise of our ministry.
- 1.7 Understand, respect, and try to ensure that the individual needs of children and adults at risk are being met within the context and circumstances of the sacramental or pastoral ministry being provided. This requires that we:

⁴² In therapeutic settings (e.g. counselling, medicine, etc.), the professional boundaries make clear that the nature of the relationship between the professional and client is *not* friendship. The boundaries between clergy and those to whom they minister though are not as clear as the strict professional boundaries that exist for those working in professional therapeutic roles. Nevertheless, experience within the Church has shown that dual relationships which combine spiritual or pastoral care and close friendship can increase the risk of actual or perceived abuse of power. In our pastoral ministry therefore, we must bear full responsibility for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries in the development of our relationships with those for whom we are called to serve, particularly with children and adults at risk.

⁴³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 276

⁴⁴ Cf. *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* §148

⁴⁵ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* §44

⁴⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 278 §1 & §2

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Canon 283 §2

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Canon 279 §1 to §3

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Canon 275 §1

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Canon 275 §2

- a. Actively promote, and model for others to follow, the practice of good safeguarding ministry in all aspects of our relationships with children and adults at risk.
- 1.8 Always give witness in our use of information and communication technology to a way of life that respects the dignity and value of the human person⁵¹. This requires that we:
- a. Always act chastely⁵².
 - b. Never deliberately access any websites or social media platforms that contain unchaste or sexually provocative imagery⁵³ and which may incorporate illegal images of children⁵⁴.
- 1.9 Seek reconciliation and resolve as far as possible any disagreements we have with those to whom we minister. This requires that we:
- a. Always act fairly and without prejudice or unjust discrimination.
 - b. Seek mediation when appropriate or needed to assist in resolving disputes or a breakdown in pastoral relationships.

⁵¹ Cf. *Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter*, Message of Pope Francis for the 50th World Day of Social Communications, 2016: "Access to digital networks entails a responsibility for our neighbour whom we do not see but who is nonetheless real and has a dignity which must be respected".

⁵² Cf. *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, §60.

⁵³ Cf. *Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response*, Pontifical Council for Social Communications, 7th May, 1989; *Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication* §11, a, Congregation for Catholic Education, 19th March 1986.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Vos estis Lux Mundi*, Art.1, §2, c: "any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes". As well as being a criminal offence, the "production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions" (*Vos estis Lux Mundi*, Art.1, §1, a, iii) is a delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue and subject to a canonical penalty which may include dismissal from the clerical state. Because of the seriousness of the crime, jurisdiction is reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cf. *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* promulgated by John Paul II, 30th April 2001 (Revised by Benedict XVI, 21st May 2010). Civil legislation in force in England and Wales states that it is "illegal to take, make, distribute, show, or possess an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph" (Protection of Children Act 1978) of someone under the age of 18. The normal position for civil legislation existing in England and Wales is that it will only apply to offences occurring in England and Wales. However, the provisions under s1 of Protection of Children Act 1978 and s160 of Criminal Justice Act 1988 now have extra-territorial protection due to s72 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Accordingly, any act carried out by a person in a country or territory outside the United Kingdom shall constitute a sexual offence under United Kingdom law if it would constitute an offence under the laws of that territory and it would also constitute a sexual offence under the civil laws of England and Wales.

2. Defend, Protect and Safeguard

With the unique welcome we receive, comes the duty to defend, protect and safeguard the sacred value of all human life from its very beginning until its end, particularly the lives of those who are vulnerable and at risk. This principle entails that we adhere to specific pastoral standards and safe practices in the conduct of our safeguarding ministry, namely to:

- 2.1 Provide, with the proper and appropriate assistance, a physically safe environment in our churches, parish halls and other parish facilities. This requires that we:
 - a. Ensure that our places of worship and the facilities for which we hold responsibility are maintained and compliant with the requirements of statutory health and safety legislation.
- 2.2 Provide personal pastoral or sacramental ministry only in places and at times of the day which offer a sufficiently open environment, and in an accountable manner. This requires that we:
 - a. Ensure that our pastoral ministry to children is conducted in an open environment where we are in view of other adults, or within their hearing.
 - b. Ensure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated with children in an open yet confidential setting or in a confessional where there is a physical separation between the child and confessor.
 - c. Ensure that prudence and discretion are used, taking into account the condition and the age of the penitent, should there ever be a need for questions to be asked of the penitent during the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation⁵⁵.
 - d. Ensure that when we are leading or participating in pre-organised pastoral or social activities for children or adults at risk, there is at least one, and whenever possible two or more, other adults present.
 - e. Maintain a written record of the date and time of the visits we make to the sick and housebound for whom we hold pastoral responsibility.
- 2.3 Assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries with children and adults at risk. This requires that we:
 - a. Avoid being alone with a child or an adult at risk without the support and assistance of at least one other adult.
 - b. Never permit a child that is unaccompanied by their parent or legal guardian, or an adult at risk who is unaccompanied by their carer, to visit or to stay overnight in the presbytery or any other residence we use.
 - c. Never take a child or an adult at risk on a trip or vacation alone.
 - d. Never give or provide alcohol (unless administering the chalice during Holy Communion), tobacco or other drugs to children or adults at risk.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 979

- 2.4 Seek the assistance of, and work in close partnership with our lay collaborators (e.g. Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, parish Safeguarding Representative(s), parishioners exercising specific roles and responsibilities within the parish) and other agencies in the exercise of our safeguarding ministry. This requires that we:
- a. Ensure our lay collaborators, with the help that they provide us in the exercise of pastoral or sacramental ministry to children and adults at risk: undergo the appropriate training; observe and comply with the safeguarding principles and standards, policies and procedures which have been adopted for use by the Catholic Church in England and Wales; work in an open and accountable manner; and, where they do not, ensure they are held to account.
 - b. Refer to other agencies for help where appropriate or when advised to by the Church's professional safeguarding staff or by the statutory authorities.
- 2.5 Stand ready to be held to account, and hold to account those with whom we collaborate, for the way we exercise our safeguarding ministry. This requires that we:
- a. Be willing to accept questions or criticism regarding the good practice of our safeguarding ministry.
 - b. Be willing to question or challenge our lay collaborators regarding their good practice in the work of safeguarding children and adults at risk.

3. Communicate with Care

With the 'privileged access' we receive, comes the duty model all communication in thoughts, words and actions on the person of Jesus Christ and exercise the sacred ministry entrusted to us faithfully, responsibly and sensitively. This principle entails that we adhere to specific pastoral standards and safe practices in the conduct of our safeguarding ministry, namely to:

- 3.1 Communicate with children and adults at risk in a way that mirrors the humility, patience, gentleness and compassion of Christ. This requires that we:
- a. Ensure that we use only appropriate and respectful forms of interaction.
 - b. Exercise care and prudence when preaching or giving talks on sensitive issues in the presence of children and adults at risk.
 - c. Acknowledge the position of authority we hold and never speak to a child or adult at risk in a sarcastic, derogatory or offensive manner.
 - d. Be mindful of, and seek to understand, the cultural differences of children and adults at risk, and their families, who are migrants or from ethnic minority backgrounds.

- 3.2 Maintain clear and appropriate boundaries with those for whom we provide pastoral care. This requires that we:
- a. Avoid any behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as coercive or controlling (coercive or controlling behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a person), harassment or bullying (harassment or bullying can occur as a result of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive humiliating or intimidating environment).
 - b. Refrain from using any physical contact that is not integral to the administration of a sacrament (nor use any unnecessary physical contact that is not in the presence and sight of a child's parent, legal guardian, teachers or other responsible adult).
- 3.3 Communicate and behave in a manner which is modelled always on the life of Christ. This requires that we:
- a. Refrain from conduct that is unsafe when exercising ministry by never being under the influence of alcohol, nor under the influence of any prescription medication that may adversely affect our capacity to safeguard children or adults at risk.
 - b. Never use profane language or make indecent, vulgar or sexual comments; nor make jests or pranks that could be reasonably perceived as suggestive by others.
 - c. Never make disparaging remarks about children or adults at risk, neither in private conversation, public discourse nor on social media.
- 3.4 Demonstrate prudence and self-awareness in the choices and decisions we take. This requires that we:
- a. Be vigilant in the awareness and consideration of how our actions, even performed with good intentions, can be misinterpreted or seem intrusive and intimidating by children and adults at risk.
- 3.5 Never use our status to solicit or obtain any personal benefit or financial advantage. This requires that we:
- a. Refrain from managing the finances and goods of any lay person, especially an adult at risk, without the permission of the Ordinary⁵⁶.
 - b. Exercise prudent judgement in giving gifts to, and receiving gifts from, an individual child or adult at risk.
 - c. Refrain from accepting personal gifts of high value or money offered by an adult at risk, yet endeavour to demonstrate with sensitivity our gratitude for their generosity.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 285 §4

- 3.6 Use electronic forms of communication and other media, respectfully, responsibly and transparently. This requires that we:
- a. Never invite children or adults at risk, or accept invitations from them, to be 'friends' or contacts on any personal social media sites⁵⁷ we use, or otherwise interact with them on those sites.
 - b. Refrain from communicating with a child on a one-on-one basis via technology or social media⁵⁸ (including text messages or email) unless we have first obtained the written consent of that child's parent or legal guardian.
 - c. Always be transparent by: ensuring that any media we use to communicate with a child can be supervised by their parent or legal guardian; using a form of media which enables a copy of the communication to be sent simultaneously to the child's parent or legal guardian; and, identifying ourselves clearly by name, as well as the pastoral office we hold, in all communications with children and adults at risk.
 - d. Notify immediately the Safeguarding Coordinator and Vicar General of any inappropriate forms of comments, images or behaviour that we receive from a child or adult at risk.
- 3.7 Respect the vulnerability and right to privacy of the children and adults at risk to whom we provide pastoral and sacramental care. This requires that we:
- a. Refrain from making any kind of video or audio recording of the pastoral or sacramental care given to children or adults at risk without the prior written permission of the parent (or the legal guardian) of each child or the permission of each adult at risk (or their official carer).
 - b. Obtain the written permission of a child's parent or legal guardian before using a child's name or image in any newsletter, website or other publication.
- 3.8 Ensure that the personal data and confidentiality of those who seek and receive our pastoral ministry is respected and maintained. This requires that we:
- a. Never provide information to others about the pastoral ministry being provided to children or adults at risk without the prior written permission of the parent (or the legal guardian) of each child or the permission of each adult at risk (or their official carer).

⁵⁷ E.g. As 'friends' on a personal *Facebook* profile.

⁵⁸ 'Social media' refers to web-based external, commercial, or media websites and applications used to connect with other people and maintain relationships and communities.

PRAYERS FOR THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

(Prayers promoted by the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors)

Heavenly Father, who loves and cares for all of your children, especially the smallest and most vulnerable, we entrust to you the lives of the many children and vulnerable adults, who have been sexually abused, and whose trust and innocence have been destroyed. Help us to hear their cries of pain and to take responsibility for so many broken lives.

We pray that within their communities and families they may find understanding and support so that with the help of your grace their wounds may be healed, and they may again know peace.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who shared our weakness in all things but sin, and lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Heavenly Father, Since your mercy has been revealed in the tenderness of your Son Jesus Christ, who said to his disciples: "Let the little children come to me", we pray that your Church may be a secure home where all children and vulnerable adults are brought closer to your Beloved Son.

May all those who have been abused physically, emotionally and sexually by your ministers, be respected and accompanied by tangible gestures of justice and reparation so that they may feel healed with the balm of your compassion.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.