



POPE BENEDICT XVI

Address to Safeguarding Professionals

St Peter's Residence, Vauxhall, Saturday, 18 September 2010

Dear Friends,

I am glad to have the opportunity to greet you, who represent the many professionals and volunteers responsible for child protection in church environments. The Church has a long tradition of caring for children from their earliest years through to adulthood, following the affectionate example of Christ, who blessed the children brought to him, and who taught his disciples that to such as these the Kingdom of Heaven belongs (cf. Mk 10:13–16).

Your work, carried out within the framework of the recommendations made in the first instance by the Nolan Report and subsequently by the Cumberlege Commission, has made a vital contribution to the promotion of safe environments for young people. It helps to ensure that the preventative measures put in place are effective, that they are maintained with vigilance, and that any allegations of abuse are dealt with swiftly and justly. On behalf of the many children you serve and their parents, let me thank you for the good work that you have done and continue to do in this field.

It is deplorable that, in such marked contrast to the Church's long tradition of care for them, children have suffered abuse and mistreatment at the hands of some priests and religious. We have all become much more aware of the need to safeguard children, and you are an important part of the Church's broad-ranging response to the problem. While there are never grounds for complacency, credit should be given where it is due: the efforts of the Church in this country and elsewhere, especially in the last ten years, to guarantee the safety of children and young people and to show them every respect as they grow to maturity, should be acknowledged. I pray that your generous service will help to reinforce an atmosphere of trust and renewed commitment to the welfare of children, who are such a precious gift from God.

May God prosper your work, and may he pour out his blessings upon all of you.