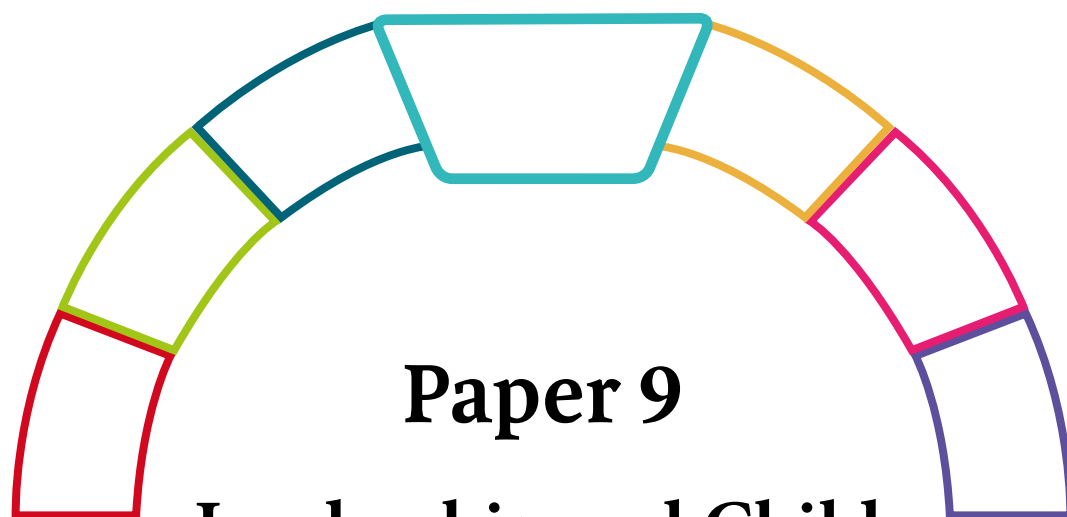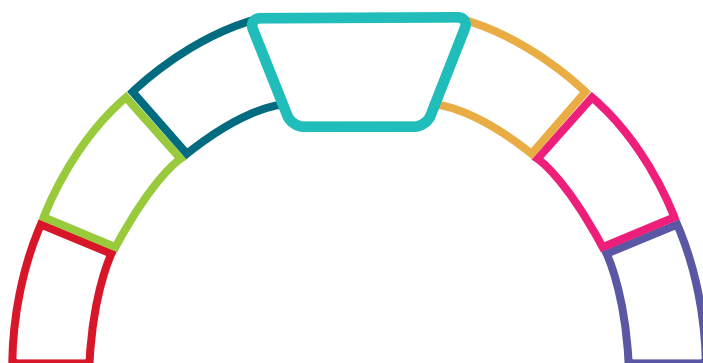# GAP
Guidance, Advice and Practice

Paper 9

Leadership and Child Safeguarding

February 2022

THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

About the GAP Papers

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board) was established to provide advice, services and assistance in furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland. The National Board also monitors compliance with legislation, policy and best practice and reports on these activities annually, as comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company, Coimirce.

Article 4 (iii) of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company requires the National Board to: "report and provide, upon request from the Constituents or any Constituent, support, advisory and training services to such Constituents or Constituent on policies and practices relating to safeguarding of children."

The National Board already provides comprehensive Guidance to support the implementation of *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. These series of Guidance, Advice and Practice (GAP) papers further complements the detailed Guidance on topics of current interest to constituents.

The bridge logo above encapsulates the aim of these GAP papers, each brick represents one of the seven safeguarding standards; the keystone signifies the importance of quality assuring compliance with the standards, which is the responsibility of the Church authority. A major part of quality assurance is becoming aware of new challenges or gaps to safeguarding as they emerge. This series of papers aims to provide the reader with information on guidance, advice and practice, which will assist in developing best practice in safeguarding children, identifying where there are risks and how to minimise these risks. To do this, these papers draw on the experiences of the National Board, research and information already available to the reader from other sources.

The GAP papers are not intended to be read as definitive positions on the chosen topic. The National Board does not claim to have inserted all available research and knowledge; nor do we claim to be masters of best practice offering indisputable views. Each of these papers will focus on a particular gap in terms of safeguarding children, and each paper will provide guidance advice and practice to help overcome these gaps, building the reader's knowledge on the subject and in informing practice, which will be underpinned by the seven safeguarding standards.

Effectively using **G**uidance, **A**dvice and **P**ractice to bridge the **GAP**.

Contents

1. Introduction

From everyone from whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."Luke 12:48

Responsibility to safeguard children is shared among us all. Certain role holders have greater responsibilities, and those in leadership retain overall responsibility. The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board) believes that, with this responsibility come duties which include abilities to listen, to respond flexibly, to be confident and transparent with decision-making and actions, and to accept the challenge of being accountable.

This paper seeks to consider the importance of good leadership in safeguarding; as well as the qualities of a good leader, and what such a person can do, to develop a safe Church, and a safeguarding culture which is open to review and change as new challenges emerge.

This is what is being asked of us.

There is no doubt that we have come a long way in addressing child abuse in the Church in Ireland. We should be proud that steps have been taken to create safe environments and to respond promptly to allegations of abuse. The safeguarding standards that have been adopted across the Church in Ireland are nationally and internationally recognised as being robust and effective. The body of committed volunteers, lay staff, priests, religious and Church leaders are daily demonstrating daily, their desire to ensure that children are safe and that past mistakes are not repeated.

There is also no doubt that Church culture has changed. Recognising the importance of safety for all in the Church requires constant effort, reflection, and direction from Church leaders. It is the leaders of the Church who set the Vision.

Pope Francis has without doubt grasped the need to safeguard children and has demonstrated in words and actions his commitment to enabling a culture of safety within the Catholic Church.

So too at a local level, the Bishops Conference of Ireland and AMRI have shown their desire to develop safe spaces for children, and have recognised and prioritised the need to have greater clarity and accountability in relation to the management of allegations. This was evident when they established the National Board; supported a one Church policy; and sought accountability through the initiation of child safeguarding Reviews. The Catholic Church in Ireland must be commended for being the first to develop such initiatives.

The Bishops Conference and AMRI have now commissioned an external strategic review of safeguarding, something to be welcomed, as this provides an opportunity for reflection and evaluation. This review is important, as there could be a tendency to become complacent about the achievements, and to neglect emerging challenges and risks. This is where good leadership becomes important.

The future of safeguarding rests with the Church leaders.

2. Leadership Qualities Required in Safeguarding

A. Vision and Purpose

The Catholic Church in Ireland currently has a Vision for child safeguarding as follows:

We recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, and are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, and we will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.[1]

Each Church Leader can share this vision in the following ways:

Through their visible commitment to Child Safeguarding

Church personnel - and leaders in particular - demonstrate their commitment to safeguard children by:

• Personal example: Most Church leaders live, as it were, in a glass bowl; their words and actions are scrutinised, critiqued, praised or criticised by the lay faithful, media, politicians, theologians, and others. Therefore, making clear and explicit statements about their commitment to safeguarding, and their vision for a safer future for all in the Church are helpful, as are taking decisive and just action when allegations are made.

  Transparency - characteristic of glass - is also much needed in Church safeguarding. In his presentation to the Safeguarding Conference for Central and Eastern Europe in Warsaw in October 2021, Cardinal Sean O Malley, reminded us that,

…in addressing the bishops of Austria, Pope Saint John Paul II stressed the importance of transparency, urging the Church to be like a "glass house" where all can be seen from the outside, even what might appear as ugly and shameful. This message is of great importance today. We must not be afraid of what we might see when looking at these situations of abuse and of how they were handled by the Church in past times. Looking honestly at these situations provides a moment of truth, especially for survivors, regarding what happened, what did not and particularly what went wrong.

Honest assessment of our failures gives the Church the insights needed for the ongoing work of doing all that is possible to prevent further abuse in the future.[2]

• Has an ability to develop a safeguarding culture: This requires clarity from the leader about their principles and values, which are then reflected in the structures and systems developed. Good safeguarding organisations deploy staff who understand their roles, receive training and support, have personal engagement with the leader, and are involved in constant review and evaluation. A good safeguarding culture is one where there is openness and transparency; where people are and feel supported; and in which staff and volunteers understand how to respond - if they are worried - what to do to safeguard children, and in which the leader accepts responsibility. When mistakes are made, these are acknowledged and systems are put in place to learn from them. In order to help to grow a safeguarding culture, the Church leader needs to be present, to be visible, and to be positive about the rights of children, their central role in the Church, and their need for protection. They also need to show compassion, in words and actions, for those who have been abused; they need to be available and to be prepared to accept responsibility for failures.

• Communications which reflect the values of the leader: Pope Francis is a well-practiced communicator who utilises many methods - apostolic letters, sermons, speeches, tweets etc. In relation to safeguarding, he has been very explicit about his desire to cleanse the Church. He has initiated reforms in canon law and has commissioned reports which have exposed failings that resulted in children being harmed. Local Church leaders could follow his example, by making use of consistent and regular communication delivered through sermons, pastoral letters, addresses to meetings, newsletters, face-to-face meetings and personal engagement.

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1 https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Safeguarding%20Children%20Policy.pdf
2 https://www.tutelaminorum.org/card-o-malleys-address-to-churches-in-central-and-eastern-europe/

Since 2016, Pope Francis has clearly set out to improve child safeguarding in the Church. In his Apostolic Letter *Vos estis lux mundi*, he says that he expects Church leaders to manifest through words and actions an understanding and commitment to their safeguarding responsibilities. In commissioning and publishing the report of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See Report of their review of Church action in relation to former Cardinal McCarrick, he demonstrated that he was not afraid to communicate findings that were critical of him and of previous Popes.

One of the seven Standards in *Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* relates to communicating the Church's safeguarding message, which is important for a number of reasons: It provides clarity, direction, and openness, and is part of necessary accountability. The people of God want to hear from their leaders about what they are doing to safeguard children in the Church.

In spite of data protection challenges, it is important for a Church leader to find ways of sharing information in as open and as honest a way as possible, identifying the limitations, while being clear about what actions have been taken to prioritise the well-being of children.

Taking decisive action when things go wrong

Pope Francis has stated that there is no place in ministry for a priest or religious who harms a child. The decision about ensuring that someone who harms a child has no role in ministry rests with the Church leader, who is supported by systems that are in place for assessment, advice, and guidance from experts, both inside and outside the Church. One of the salutary lessons that needs to be learned from the abuses inflicted by Brendan Smyth as a priest, is that it was known before he was ordained that he had a sexual interest in children, but tragically, this was ignored. There is an abundance of evidence and research which indicates that abusers do not stop abusing once they become ordained, or when they are moved from one ministry to another.

Decisive action is required, which removes such a person entirely from ministry and from contact with children

Honesty and Integrity:

Historically, the management of allegations of child abuse historically left the clear impression that the protection of the Church as an institution was more important than the protection of children. Trust in Church leaders became eroded; and the lack of openness from Church leaders led to a perception of cover-up to avoid scandal. Paradoxically, in attempting to manage situations in secrecy and without reference to statutory bodies, those in a position of power brought greater scandal to the Church. In spite of a growth in awareness of the need to be more open about allegations, there remains a fear and reluctance to expose the reality of the abuse of children in the Church. Most recently, the December 2021 *Report of the Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church in France (CIASE)* disclosed that it has identified at least 3,000 priests who have been accused of abuse of children; and the report criticises the French Church for not really paying attention to clerical child abuse until 2010.

The French report recommends that for the Church to move forward, there has to be a process of justice, truth, and reparation, and accepting responsibility for abuse and cover-up.

Accountability

The failures of Church leaders across the world to safeguard and protect children have exposed their hesitancy to confront and address the harm caused by abusing priests and religious. Inaction and cover-up has been understood and acknowledged as causing great harm to victims of abuse, to the lay faithful, and to the many good women and men who serve in ministry across the Church. Pope Francis has taken steps to put in place mechanisms to hold accountable those leaders who failed.

In two of his Apostolic Letters – *Come una madre amorevole* - As a loving mother (2016), and *Vos estis lux mundi* - You are the light of the world (2018), Pope Francis sets out clearly that negligence, inaction and cover-up are now classified as crimes in canon law.

The expectations of leaders within the Church are now very clear, i.e., that all who minister in the Church are accountable for how they safeguard children.

There are two components of accountability – Answerability, which means providing information and justification for how one's actions align with laws and standards; and Enforcement, which means being subject to, and accepting the consequences of, failing to meet the requirements of the law and standards.

Standard 7 in *Safeguarding Children 2016* addresses the need to quality-assure child safeguarding in the local Church, in requiring the Church body to develop a plan of action to ensure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This in effect places responsibility on the Church leader to ensure that the structures, systems, and personnel employed to safeguard children are effective in their allocated responsibilities. In practical terms the leader delivers on this responsibility through the annual self-audit, and by inviting the National Board to conduct a Review of safeguarding.

Accountability in the public domain is (painfully) realised through scrutiny by public and statutory investigations and inquiries, and by media exposure. In the narrative of clerical child sexual abuse in Ireland, television current affairs and documentary programmes have played a very influential part in the exposure of past abuses. Another forum for accountability is that an archbishop must make a report every five years to Rome, the *Ad Limina or Quinquennial Report*, effectively a statement on their stewardship, and it is now expected that such reports provide information on child safeguarding. There is however no requirement on an archbishop to keep these reports private, but most choose to do so.

In late 2009 the Church took a step towards enabling self- examination when Bishops and Provincials invited the National Board to conduct reviews of safeguarding practice in all Dioceses and Religious Orders. All reports were made publicly available, and these can still be viewed on the Church body's website or at www.safeguarding.ie/reports.

The second iteration of reviews by the National Board have been plagued by challenges to information sharing; declining engagement by some Church bodies with children; a degree of apathy; and the Covid-19 health pandemic.

Without constant evaluation, feedback and external review there can be no confidence in the effectiveness of the protective measures that are being put in place. None of us like to expose ourselves to external examination, and we resent criticism. We are all human and struggle with what, at times, appears to be constant negativity.

This takes bold leadership.

3. Leadership Theories

A. Leadership Theory

There is a huge body of academic study, research, debate and publication in relation to leadership, but for the purposes of this paper, an outline of theory development will suffice. Most of the theoretical thinking about leadership has been done in the fields of business and politics, so application to the Catholic Church has to be made with care.

A definition of leadership from the world of business suggests that it is

• ....the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal... this can mean directing workers and colleagues with a strategy to meet the company's needs....

• Leadership captures the essentials of being able and prepared to inspire others. Effective leadership is based upon ideas— both original and borrowed—that are effectively communicated to others in a way that engages them enough to act as the leader wants them to act.

• A leader inspires others to act while simultaneously directing the way that they act. They must be personable enough for others to follow their orders, and they must have the critical thinking skills to know the best way to use the resources at an organization's disposal.[3]

A leader is someone who sees what needs to be done and then ensures that it is done. Leadership is a form of influence on the behaviour of others. Kevin Kruse in an article on the Forbes website provides a useful definition: 'Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.'[4] This fairly simple definition includes a number of key words to show that leadership is dynamic, it involves others, and it helps them to cooperate optimally towards a mutually agreed objective.

Benmira and Agboola have examined eleven specific theories of leadership in a 2021 article in the BMJ Leader online journal.[5] Developmentally, these range from the 19th century 'Great Man' theory through to the much more recent Servant Leader thesis. The focus of theoretical reflection and description has moved from leaders being 'natural born', through identifying the traits and characteristics, actions and skills of effective leaders, through leaders adapting their style to their environment, through leadership being a cost–benefit exchange, through inspirational style of the leaders pushing followers to higher and higher levels of achievement, and on through the emphasis being on engaging followers cooperatively.

It is probably useful to borrow concepts from the various theories, rather than to get lost in academic wrangling about which is the best one. Apart from the first, all of these theories contain ideas which can inform effective leadership within an organisation, and some of these will be alluded to later in this paper.

There are particular facets of the Catholic Church as an organisation, which are of interest. It is organised on a hierarchical basis; however, each constituent element of the Church has independence in canon law. The Church has never presented itself as any form of democracy; however, the equality before God of all of its members is a central tenet. Historically, leaders within the Church have been predominantly male; however, at least half of the members of the Church are female lay-persons, who have no clear pathways into leadership roles. Finally, it is a human structure which can be sociologically analysed, but it is also believed to be the Mystical Body of Christ, a very long established doctrine.[6] These factors have to be taken into account when applying leadership theory to the Catholic Church.

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3 https://www.thebalancesmb.com/leadership-definition-2948275
4 www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/?sh=77098f205b90
5 Benmira S, Agboola M. BMJ Leader 2021;5:3–5. doi:10.1136/leader-2020-000296 – at https://bmjleader.bmj.com/content/5/1/3
6 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 21st, 1964 - www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

Comprehensive and structured training and development opportunities are rarely made available to incoming leaders, while at the same time they have to quickly 'lay their hand on the plough' and not look back.[7]

What is not made overt in leadership theory is that a position of leadership can be very lonely, and that the incumbent is always vulnerable to attack. The idiom of cutting down the tallest poppy describes the difficulties inherent in being 'first among equals' or *primus inter pares*. While bishops serve for life, or at least until retirement, members of Religious Orders can be chosen for a fixed period of leadership, after which they generally return to ordinary membership, and this can be an additional consideration in how they adjust to leadership.

B. Leadership and Management

These two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they refer to quite different roles and tasks. Ward (2020)[8] has compared and contrasted these two senior roles, but there is no suggestion that one is in any way superior to or more important than the other. Essentially, a leader may or may not be a manager; and a manager may or may not be a leader.

Ideally, an organisation would have individuals in both roles; the leader sets the direction and provides the motivation and inspiration, while the manager is responsible for the day-to-day achievement of targets and goals. Appointing a manager to a leadership role, or vice versa, would likely result in frustrations and inefficiencies for everyone involved. However, no leader or manager is 'the finished article' in having all of the knowledge, attitudes and skills required for their appointed role, and none can be a perfect practitioner. While the skills of leadership and management can be learned, the personality characteristics of incumbents are much more difficult to influence.

C. Leadership, Power, Authority and Governance in the Church:

One can only lead if one has power. Leadership can only exist when there are followers; and the relationship between leader and follower is asymmetrical. The leader has obvious power, but the follower also has power, if a subtler form of it. Unlike the sheep of the parables, human followers have the choice of not recognising the legitimacy of the authority of the appointed leader, and by doing so, to render it less powerful over and more incidental to their interests. An overt reliance on coercive power may bring about conformity, but the leader who resorts to this approach cannot then expect loyalty and enthusiasm from the subordinate.

Pope John Paul II made clear in his Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus* what the correct balance to be struck is, when he wrote that:

> The power and authority of the bishops bears the mark of *diaconia* or stewardship, fitting the example of Jesus Christ himself who "came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Therefore, the power that is found in the Church is to be understood as the power of being a servant and is to be exercised in that way; before anything else it is the authority of a shepherd.[9]

Being shepherds 'with the smell of sheep' has been an exhortation of Pope Francis to the priests of the Church.

7 https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/luke/9/
8 Ward, S. (2020) What Is Leadership? Definition & Examples of Leadership - www.thebalancesmb.com/leadership-definition-2948275
9 https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus.html

In his very insightful 2010 paper, *Leadership and power*, Kessler[10] explores the appropriate use of power and authority in a Church setting. In the Abstract of the article, he states that:

> Leadership does not exist without power. Thus we have to reflect on power in order to lay a theoretical foundation for responsible leadership. This interdisciplinary article collects insights from the disciplines of theology, sociology, and cross cultural management. It provides a concise summary of what a Christian leader should know about power in order to use his/her power in an adequate way. The theological reflection reminds us of the fact that, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition, God gave power to humankind (Guardini, 1998). Two opposite dangers are described in this article, namely the abuse of power on the one hand and the misconception of powerlessness as a Christian virtue on the other hand.

Later, Kessler sets out in a table the various types of power that are used by leaders in organisations, and this is reproduced overleaf.

10 https://koersjournal.org.za/index.php/koers/article/view/95 available to download from https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/BUS209-4.2-LeadershipandPower.pdf

Table 1: Taxonomy of seven power bases

Groups	Power Bases	More positional
Formal power	1. Power by legitimation	
Power by sanctions	2. Power by punishment	
	3. Power by rewards	
Informational power	4. Power by information control	
	5. Power by expert knowledge	
Power by identification	6. Power by relations	
	7. Power by charisma	
		More personal

He stresses that power in itself is not problematic; in fact, in leadership it is essential. However, he suggests that the use of power grounded on the more personal bases is more appropriate to, and more likely to be effective in, the Christian Churches.

Kessler completes his detailed article with guidance on the ethical use of power by a Christian leader. [11] His list of seven suggestions is:

1. To accept power, as it is from God.
2. To remember however that every power is only on loan from God and the leader is accountable to Him.
3. To exercise leadership as a responsible service - serving God, serving the Church, and serving the people outside and inside of the Church.
4. To use power either for good, or to prevent bad; but never strive for power as an end in itself.
5. To be aware that each power base may be used appropriately, or can be abused; so, ask which power base you are willing and able to use - depending on your context and your personality.
6. To respect the culture of the people you lead, and especially their perception of power.
7. To be open to criticism of your use of power. Ask mature persons for feedback on your leadership style.

In his Apostolic Constitution, *Pascite Gregem Dei*, in which he announced the reforming of Book VI responsibility of the canon law, Pope Francis outlines the responsibilities of bishops:

Bishops are thus called to govern "by counsel, exhortation and example, as well as by their authority and sacred power" (Lumen Gentium, 27), inasmuch as charity and mercy demand that a Father also make every effort to correct deviations.[12]

11 Ibid. p. 22
12 https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20210523_pascite-gregem-dei.html

In an article (May 2020) written by Joan Chittister,[13] in which she was criticising the American political establishment's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, she makes some apt observations about leadership and power:

> Leadership unifies a group; it doesn't divide it. Leadership pursues the common good, not the personal good. Leadership saves the future for us rather than render it stillborn in the present… Blind obedience, the religious contribution to this kind of enigma, was cemented in the laws of the church and meant to serve institutional purposes. But blind obedience was never at the base of the deepest streams of ancient spirituality or the Gospel that nurtured it. The great spiritual traditions were all founded in response to some overarching social evil. Each of them boldly confronted the world they lived in with an alternative lifestyle, a different set of values, or by taking direct aim at social systems that served rulers rather than the ruled…
>
> Leadership meant holiness, meant authenticity, meant caring for the people rather than playing minion to the king. Even when it meant risking your own prestige, social status, public approval — or sometimes even your life — to do it…
>
> From where I stand, we have been confused about the difference between power and leadership. We have been too long in awe of tumult devoid of vision. We have lost a taste for real solid gold leadership and accepted the gold-plated lookalike instead.

Leadership also has an important responsibility in relation to governance. 'Governance' is simply the act of governing, from the Greek word for 'to steer'. The leader sets the direction, in the same way that a captain of a ship would.

Having done so, their other governance tasks are to provide stewardship on behalf of the stakeholders in overseeing the success of the shared journey, and to empower staff and create connections and effective relationships between all involved.[14]

Finally, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) in Australia, which had examined over a four-year period abuses within Church-related institutions, highlighted significant failures in ecclesial leadership and governance; and in its Recommendation 16.7 urged that:

> The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and the participation of laymen and women. This review should draw from the approaches to governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies.[15]

D. Leadership in the Scriptures

The Old Testament is full of descriptions of those appointed by God to lead His people out of bondage and error, and into a better place, the Promised Land. This group of men - and a small number of women - includes Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Ezekiel, Deborah, Esther and Jeremiah.

Moses, tired of the constant bickering amongst the Israelites, said to them, "From each of your tribes pick wise, shrewd and experienced men for me to make your leaders"[16], suggesting that astuteness, perceptiveness and accomplishments were the qualities required of such leaders.

13 https://www.ncronline.org/print/news/coronavirus/where-i-stand/what-are-we-looking-power-or-leadership
14 Leadership & Governance Implications and Connections - The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools - https://taapcs.ca/pdf/Leadership%20%26%20Governance%20Power%20Point.pdf
15 https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/unredacted-volume-16-religious-institutions-book-1.pdf
16 https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/deuteronomy/1/

In the Book of Chronicles, God grants Solomon the wisdom and knowledge that he requests: "Therefore give me wisdom and knowledge to act as leader of this people, for how otherwise could such a great people as yours be governed?"[17] The Book of Proverbs contains much counsel on developing leadership qualities, including generosity: "Refuse no kindness to those who have a right to it, if it is in your power to perform it" [18]; and justice: "Make your views heard, on behalf of the dumb, on behalf of all the unwanted; make your views heard, pronounce an upright verdict, defend the cause of the poor and the wretched."[19]

In the New Testament, Jesus also spoke about leadership, but more importantly, he modelled a particular type of leadership to fit with the new Kingdom that he came on earth to announce. The form of leadership that he promoted did not fit with the expected ideas of how a ruler would and should behave. He presented what was a counter-cultural paradigm in which '…the humble are exalted, the lowly are the greatest, and the last are first'.[20]

Jesus did not refer to himself as a King; but he made it very clear that the reason for his being among people was to preach the Kingdom of God, and to show others how to enter and dwell within it.

Even when Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king, he responded by avoiding taking on that title:

> Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. As it is, my kingdom does not belong here.' Pilate said, 'So, then you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say that I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'[21]

In an article on Characteristics of Church Leaders by the Word Truth Ministry[22], it says that:

> The above passages point out key differences between worldly and Christ-like leadership.
>
> • Worldly leadership emphasizes authority over others, but Christ-like leadership emphasizes serving those who need oversight and care.
> • Worldly leadership is accompanied by titles, but Christ-like leadership is accompanied by a towel.
> • Worldly leadership brings attention to those in power, but Christ-like leadership brings attention to those in need.
> • Worldly leadership expects to be served as a reward, but Christ-like leadership finds reward in service.
>
> Living as a Christ-like servant is a basic characteristic of a true church leader.

At the end of a very long address to his disciples, reported in the Gospel of Matthew, it is stated that, "Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and his teaching made a deep impression on the people because he taught them with authority, unlike their own scribes".[23] This authority was manifest to them through his compassionate attitude, his personal integrity, and the authenticity of his message.

17 www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/2-chronicles/1/
18 https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/proverbs/3/
19 https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/proverbs/31/
20 https://margmowczko.com/jesus-teaching-on-leadership-and-community-in-matthews-gospel/
21 https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/john/18/
22 https://www.wordtruth.org/PDF/Characteristics%20of%20Church%20Leaders.pdf
23 https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/matthew/7/

4. Leadership in Safeguarding in the Church

The shameful history of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in Ireland is paralleled by the shorter but important record of the Church's responses to it. It has to be acknowledged that the initial response was hesitant and reluctant, but one important indication of intent was the publication of the 1996 *Framework for a Church Response* document by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Advisory Committee on Child Sexual Abuse. The intervening twenty-five years have been very active and effective in terms of putting in place the architecture, personnel, policy and guidance, along with agreed processes for prevention and intervention. The Irish Episcopal Conference and AMRI together have now commissioned a strategic Review of the Church's child safeguarding services, which will be initiated during 2022. This paper cannot pre-empt or even predict the conclusions and recommendations of this planned Review. It is of interest however to look outside the island of Ireland to take note of and to learn from initiatives taken by other national Catholic Churches.

A. Macro Level

Reference has been made to the development of a plan by the Catholic Church in Australia, *The Light from the Southern Cross - Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*. In the Catholic Church in the USA, a different but also very relevant initiative was taken by the Catholic management organisation, Leadership Roundtable, which resulted in the convening of the Catholic Partnership Summit, a combined clergy and laity exercise, from which the document, *Heal the Body of Christ: A plan to create a new culture of leadership and a new response to abuse in the Catholic Church* was produced in 2019.[24] This is quite a short plan, at just 40 pages long, and both it and the process it involved could provide a blueprint for other national Churches, to tackle the twin challenges of the legacy and ongoing risk of abuse, and the need for developments in leadership to ensure that safeguarding remains a core element of Church ministry.

Early in the American Church's plan is a summary of the Principles that guided their process, the Outcomes that they sought, and the Key Concepts that informed their work and these are presented here:

Guiding Principles

- impact the Catholic Church based on five principles: transparency, accountability, competency, justice, and trust;
- impact the leadership and management culture of the Church, in line with Catholic beliefs, ecclesiology, and canon law;
- restore trust in the Church based on measurable, visible outcomes; engage both ordained and lay Catholics, working together for the mission;
- lean forward, not dwell in the past;
- be realistic and able to be translated into practical strategy, organization, and implementation.

Desired Outcomes

1. Model the clergy-lay collaboration and co-responsibility that is the future of our Church.
2. Develop actionable recommendations for USCCB leadership.
3. Develop actionable recommendations for bishops and disseminate as best practices throughout the country.
4. Begin to focus on root causes of the crisis.

Key Concepts

The following concepts capture the heart of the dialogue at the Catholic Partnership Summit. There was a recognition that:

- there are twin crises that need twin solutions;
- silence is no longer an option; there is an urgent need for bishops to act now;
- at the heart of all abuse, is an abuse of power;
- we should not conflate authority and power;
- there has been a failure to call clergy to accountability;

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24 https://leadershiproundtable.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SummitReport2019.pdf

- everyone needs to be at the table, a diverse range of clergy and laity, including bishops and religious, mothers and fathers;
- any reforms need to address both the heart and mind: there is a need for moral integrity and spiritual conversion, as well as procedural and structural change;
- synodality is a necessary characteristic of the response;
- the results of reform will not only address the abuse and leadership failures, but will help the mission of the Church to thrive.[25]

B. Micro level

The leadership of the local Church at diocesan or religious community level makes demands on the appointed Church authority. The National Board's Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 document highlights over 70 specific tasks and/or responsibilities to be discharged by a Church authority or the person to whom they delegate. This can be experienced as constituting an impossibly heavy burden; or as a core function to be shared with a variety of others. This paper started with the statement that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. This is true in society as a whole, as well as within the Catholic Church. Of course, we need to avoid the risk that what is everyone's responsibility can quickly become nobody's responsibility, so a caveat needs to be entered here; namely, that some identified person has to be accountable, and that is the leader.

And we return here to leadership theory to suggest the qualities and competencies required of a leader of a child safeguarding service. In its very accessible manual, *Leading practice - A resource guide for Child Protection frontline and middle managers,*[26] the Child Protection section of the Victorian Government Department of Human Services in Australia sets out what it refers to as the Child Protection leadership capability framework.

In the section of this which lists the leadership and decision-making capabilities of an effective leader of a statutory child protection service, the following five areas of competence are identified:

Delivering results
- Achieving child outcomes
- Co-creating success
- Delivering program improvements

Thinking clearly
- Critical inquiry
- Evaluating analytically
- Seeing the whole
- Business insight

Mastering oneself
- Self-management and awareness
- Mental agility

Leading and inspiring
- Creating clarity
- Surfacing potential

Engaging others
- Listening deeply
- Building relationships

5. Conclusion

The Catholic Church in Ireland is at an important juncture in terms of ministry with children. The crisis of child abuse has driven many away from their faith. Covid and closed down places of worship and caused many lay people to disengage from the rituals of the Church. It is not for the National Board to tell the Church how to encourage children to develop an interest in faith. We can however encourage Church leaders through action and words to communicate that the Church is a safe and welcoming place for children. Leadership is critical. We need to see leaders who understand the need to engage with children – safely; who acknowledge and repent for the harm caused in the Church; and who, in living like Christ, mirror his gentle ways on earth. In child safeguarding terms, to be Christ like, is to demonstrate through words and actions the central importance of caring for children and protecting them from harm.

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25 https://leadershiproundtable.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SummitReport2019.pdf page 4
26 Available at https://practicelearning.info/pluginfile.php/317/mod_data/content/3904/leading-practice-resource-guide.pdf