



**MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MARCUS
TO PARISHIONERS AND SCHOOLS
OUR LADY OF KIRKSTALL PARISH, LEEDS**

The news of Fr Patrick Smythe's conviction 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. I know how deeply this news will be felt particularly by those of you within the Parish of Our Lady of Kirkstall.

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.

For you, members of our parish and diocesan family, in this time of great anguish and sadness, I am conscious that there will be conflicting thoughts and emotions 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.

As well as the spiritual care provided by your parish clergy, I wish to offer sensitive professional pastoral care to both the parish and its schools. For this reason, I have asked that qualified members of the Catholic Care team be available to listen with compassion and understanding to whatever you need to express at this difficult time. In addition, should you wish to speak individually and in confidence with a trained counsellor, this will be facilitated. The opportunities to meet face to face with this team will take place on Wednesday 13th April 4:00pm to 6:00pm at Holy Name Parish Centre, Otley Old Road, Leeds, LS16 6HW.

Should you need immediate support with how you are feeling, please contact Rachel Wilkinson, Email: rachel.wilkinson@catholic-care.org.uk or Tel: 07895 201687.

If you have any support needs or safeguarding concerns, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, Ms Suzanne Mitchell, Email: safeguarding@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or Tel: 07515 598523.

Please be assured that all of you, and 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 Kirkstall.

**✠ Marcus Stock
Bishop of Leeds**