

Safeguarding Policy

Congregation
of the
Blessed Sacrament

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Contacts:

Contact details Local Representative: Fr Rene Esoy Tel: 01 872 4597

Designated Liaison Person: Eileen Mearns email: eileenmearns@btinternet.com

An Garda Siochána Dublin – Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Unit Tel: 01 666 3435

web: www.psnipolice.uk Health Service Executive (HSE)

Contact your local Community Care Area Tel:

web: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/child_protection_guidance

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland Tel: 01 505 3124 (Office) web: www.safeguarding.ie Director: Teresa Devlin Tel: 01 505 3018

Childline Childline provides a 24-hour listening service for all children up to the age of 18. Tel: 1800 666 666 web: www.childline.ie

Faoiseamh Helpline A Caring Organisation for People who have been abused. Tel: From the Republic of Ireland 1800 33 1234 Tel: From Northern Ireland 0800 973 272 web: www.faoiseamh.com

One in Four Offers a voice to and support for women and men who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence and also to their family and friends. Tel: 01 663 4070 web: www.oneinfour.org

The Samaritans Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Tel: 1850 609 0900

Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) 29 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2 The ISPCC's vision is to see an Ireland where all children are heard and valued. Tel: 01 676 7960 web: www.ispcc.ie Catholic Youth Care Arran Quay, Dublin 7

Who We Are

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is an apostolic group of men whose ideal is to assist the Church in her efforts to form Christian communities whose center of life is the Eucharist. We commit ourselves to the implementation of this ideal in collaboration with lay persons engaged in Christian ministries.

For 150 years, our priests, deacons, and brothers have reached all continents of the globe and continue the mission begun by St. Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist.

We believe that Christ in the Eucharist has the power to effect a radical transformation in our society and in all people. The power of the Eucharist motivates and strengthens us to work for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

We proclaim the reality of God's love in the Eucharist by our "gift of self" to Him and our brothers and sisters. By prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and an active apostolic life, we strive to make Christ in the Eucharist better known and loved. In all that we do, Christ in the Eucharist is our inspiration and the center of our personal and community life.

We seek to understand all human reality in the light of the Eucharist, source and summit of the life of the Church." Rule of Life No. 34

Our Mission

We are an apostolic group of men whose mission is:

To assist the Church in its efforts to form Christian communities whose centre of life is the Eucharist;

To allow the mystery of the Eucharist to take hold of our lives so completely that we will live this mystery fully and proclaim its meaning through various apostolates;

To respond to the hungers of the human family with the riches of God's love manifested in the Eucharist;

To strive to make Christ in the Eucharist better known and loved through prayer in the Presence of the Eucharist and an active apostolic life;

To proclaim the Eucharist as a powerful force of renewal for Church and Society.

We commit ourselves to carry out this mission in collaboration with the laity. We combine prayer and work in order that the entire world may be totally transformed into the people of God the Body of the Lord and temple of the Holy Spirit. In solidarity with those who are working for genuine human advancement, we are alert to the social implications of our actions.

We carry out our Eucharistic mission especially in city-centre shrines and parishes. “Our shrines are centres of Eucharistic Community and evangelisation, places of adoration, celebration and reconciliation, oases of peace in the heart of the city.”

“We make our parishes into authentic Communities shaped by the Eucharist, source and centre of their life.”

Our Mission is embedded in Gospel values. arising from this, the Blessed Sacrament Congregation UK/I has adopted a comprehensive set of Safeguarding Children policies and procedures. This policy has as its over-riding concern the safety and welfare of all children. The policy includes procedures for best practice for the prevention of child abuse and for an appropriate response where abuse is alleged or suspected. A further concern in developing these procedures is to create a secure and supportive atmosphere in which those who have suffered abuse in the past can be assured of a sensitive, caring and compassionate response, and should be offered appropriate pastoral care for them and their family.

The procedures are concerned with ensuring that the rights in natural justice of a person who is accused of abuse are respected, and that appropriate pastoral care is provided for them and their family.

In the Province of UK/I we do not provide services specifically for children. However our establishments are open to the public and therefore we are committed to ensuring the best possible practice in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Children

We have drawn on the standards and guidance from the national document ‘Safeguarding Children’ Policy and Standards for the Church in Ireland as follows:-

1. Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments: A written policy on keeping children safe is required: Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all. Everyone in our organisation has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.

2. Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations: Children have a right to be listened to and heard: Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the Church and to civil authorities.

3. Care and Support for the Complainant: Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.

4. Care and Management of the Respondent; Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.

5. Training and education for keeping children safe: All Church personnel should be offered training in Safeguarding Children to maintain high standards and good practice.

6. Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message: Children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church. Access to advice and support: Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Those who

have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.

7. Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards: To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all Church organisations. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside of Church organisations can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures undertaken.

Some Definitions

For the purposes of this document,

- a child is defined as any person under the age of eighteen years.
- A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or older who by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness may be unable to take care of him or herself against ‘significant harm’ or ‘exploitation’.
- The term vulnerable adult may include a person with: a learning disability; a physical disability; a sensory impairment; impaired mental health; dementia; acquired brain injury; a drug or alcohol problem; certain types of physical illness; or a person who is frail due to age or other factors.

Definition of Abuse

- Abuse is a violation of a person’s fundamental right to respect and to bodily integrity by any other person or persons.
- Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Child abuse is generally catergorised into four broad groups: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.
- A child may be subject to more than one form of abuse during his or her childhood.
- Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults or medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time

rather than at one specific point. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs that is likely to result in significant harm.

- Physical abuse includes shaking, use of excessive force, hitting, slapping, misuse of medication or misuse of restraint.
- Emotional abuse occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met and where a child is subjected to physical or sexual abuse or to bullying.
- Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her sexual gratification of another

Blessed Sacrament Congregation UK/I Child Safeguarding Policy

We are committed to the Gospel values that cherish and safeguard children, as well as protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm or neglect. We endeavour to do this by:

- Circulating our Policy and Procedures to our personnel and those with whom we work.
- Raising awareness of this important area, especially among all those who work directly with children, regarding:
 - a) The values we hold in safeguarding children
 - b) Advice and training in safe practices
 - c) The importance of familiarising all with our Policy & Procedures.

Some Basic Guidelines

1. Each member recognises we have a special duty to provide a safe environment in which the dignity and rights of children are respected and their well-being is promoted; that the welfare of children and young people is of paramount importance and commits itself to implementing this Safeguarding Children Policy; responds in accordance with the guidance

set out in Safeguarding Children; Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2016) to any concern about the safety of children that comes to their attention.

2. If children are present in our facility that they be supervised at all times.
3. That young people under eighteen will not be employed but may be accepted as volunteers, provided there is adequate supervision in place. The person in charge has the responsibility to ensure that proper recruitment practices; the provision of training; adequate supervision; the support of employees and volunteers, as well as the review of practices, are put in place.
4. The Local Safeguarding has a responsibility to ensure that all allegations and suspicions of abuse are brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person without delay.
5. The Designated Liaison Person has the responsibility to inform the statutory authorities (An Garda Síochána and the HSE in the Republic of Ireland; the PSNI and the Health and Social Services Trust (DHSSPS) in Northern Ireland) of allegations or suspicions of child abuse.
6. In the event of a complaint, whether current or historical, a pastoral response to the alleged victim and to the alleged perpetrator will be provided.
7. The policy is reviewed, as a minimum, every three years, and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or in legislation.
8. A review of the implementation of this policy will take place each year as part of the annual Provincial Visitation review.
9. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament Policy for Safeguarding Children - commit to:
 - Cherishing and safeguarding children
 - Demonstrating that the right of the child to protection from harm is paramount
 - Fostering best practice
 - Demonstrating accountability through establishing effective structures
 - Supporting personnel in safeguarding children

- Establishing safe recruitment and vetting practices with the aim of ensuring that those appointed have the appropriate motivation and skills to undertake the work for which they are recruited and to prevent the recruitment of those who might pose a risk to children.
- Maintaining codes of behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and is not acceptable behaviour as an essential part of safeguarding children.
- Operating safe activities for children – if and when they occur

Code of Good Behaviour

It is important that all those working within our establishment, including Blessed Sacrament Fathers and Brothers, employees, volunteers should:

- Treat all children in a manner that fully respects their dignity and rights
- Provide, in their own behaviour, an example of good conduct at all times
- Respect each child's boundaries
- Help children develop an awareness and understanding of their own rights and a respect for the rights of others
- Provide children with information as to how they can seek help if they have a problem and from whom.
- Be visible to others when working with children
- Be accompanied – children should be accompanied by two adults or where only one adult is available, in a place open to public view, an open door policy will be implemented.
- Challenge and report behaviour that is abusive or potentially abusive
- Develop a culture where children can talk openly about their contacts with staff and others.

In general, it is inappropriate for all, to spend excessive time alone with children away from others, or take children out on their own.

Use alcohol, tobacco or non-prescriptive drugs when in the company of children, nor should they be offered to those under 18 years.

There should never be an occasion when a child is hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse a child; develop sexual relationships with a child; engage in inappropriate conversations with children; develop relationships with children which could be deemed to be in any way exploitative or abusive - Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

They must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never: Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive; behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative; do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves; condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive; act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children ; exclude or discriminate against particular children or show favour towards particular children.

The Role of the Local Safeguarding Representative

It is important to have a local representative. This person promotes the safeguarding of children within the establishment. They act as the point of contact and liaise with the Designated Liaison Person as necessary. The role of the Local Safeguarding Representative will be to promote the safeguarding of children by:

Raising awareness of what safeguarding is.

Disseminating information on The Blessed Sacrament Policy for Safeguarding Children.

Ensuring that any activities operate in a manner which ensures the safety and well-being of the children involved.

Ensuring that those responsible for running activities are aware of safe procedures.

It is vital that the person who receives the allegation, or who suspects abuse, records in writing, as accurately as possible, what has been revealed and reports any incident that causes concern to the Local Safeguarding Representative.

Ensuring that the contact details of the Designated Liaison Person are widely publicised.

The Local Safeguarding Representative shall:

1. Ensure that the Designated Liaison Person is informed and is sent the relevant records as soon as possible. In an emergency, ensure that the relevant authorities are informed.
2. A record of the information received should be made and a log of actions taken. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the referral but at least before the end of the day on which it was received. Entries must be timed, dated and signed by the author.
3. This record along with any notes taken to date and all relevant information should be passed to the Designated Liaison Person. The overall responsibility for safeguarding children remains with the person in charge.

The Designated Liaison Person

is the person appointed by the Blessed Sacrament Congregation UK/I to receive allegations of child abuse. Having a thorough knowledge of the policy and correct procedure the Designated Liaison Person shall:

1. Receive information about an allegation or suspicion of child abuse
2. Ensure that the procedure about how to manage suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Blessed Sacrament Fathers and Brothers, employees and volunteers has been followed, and to ensure a referral has been made to the statutory authority where appropriate.
3. Create a Safeguarding Children case file for every referral. This file will include a log of actions, events and information received using the dedicated form for this purpose. Entries should be made as soon as possible after an allegation has been made or a suspicion has arisen, but at the latest before the end of the day. Each entry must be timed, dated and signed by the Designated Liaison Person.
4. Take possession of any written records made by any person in connection with the case and place them on the Safeguarding Children Case File.
5. Explain the procedures for addressing the allegation or disclosure to the person who has raised the concern and that the data protection declaration is signed (by the child's parent or guardian where appropriate). This consent relates to this Safeguarding Children concerns process only – consent is not required for the making of a referral to the H.S.E./ AN Garda Síochána/ PSNI/ DHSSPS.
6. To contact emergency or appropriate services where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk of harm. An immediate referral should be made to the Health and Social Services. Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances a child is left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention. Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve, and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence.
7. Make enquiries to identify the present and previous appointments of the respondent in order to establish whether there are any previous concerns about his/her practice, or any current grounds for concern in relation to the safety and well-being of children.

8. In conjunction with the Superior, agree the process to meet with the respondent as soon as possible, unless the statutory authorities have requested that such a meeting be deferred. This meeting takes place after contacting the relevant authorities. The purpose of the meeting is to inform the respondent of the existence of a concern regarding child abuse and of the process being followed. a) The respondent should be given information about his or her entitlement to seek legal advice (both civil and, where appropriate, canonical) and about the Safeguarding Children process. b) The respondent should be informed that he or she is not obliged, in law, to respond or to furnish evidence, but that any statement provided will be taken into account in the statutory investigation. c) As agreed above between the Designated Liaison Person and the Superior, the respondent should be informed of the nature and detail of the allegation or suspicion and the name of the person raising it. d) Arrange for an Adviser to be offered to provide support for the respondent. Such an appointment will be made by the Designated Liaison Person in consultation with the person concerned and with the Provincial. e) A written record of the meeting must be prepared, agreed with the respondent, signed and dated.

9. Implement the referral policy as outlined.

10. In cases where a Designated Liaison Person has a concern about a child but is not sure whether to make a referral, he or she should seek appropriate advice. He or she may consult the National Safeguarding Children Office, the Health and Social Services, DHSSPS and/or An Garda Síochána / PSNI on the appropriate steps to be taken. The Designated Liaison Person must keep a written record of the outcome of the consultation with the H.S.E./ AN Garda Síochána/ PSNI/ DHSSPS on the Safeguarding Children Case File.

11. Decisions not to refer a matter must always be in consultation with the National Safeguarding Children Office.

12. Ensure the availability of the Advisory Panel if required, and convene the Advisory Panel at an appropriate time.

13. Follow the advice given by H.S.E./ AN Garda Síochána/ PSNI/ DHSSPS where a Safeguarding Children concern has been referred to them. Allow the Health and Social Services/ DHSSPS / An Garda Síochána / PSNI to conduct their enquiries unimpeded.

14. Do not visit the family or contact family members without prior discussion with investigators

15. Maintain a dialogue with the Investigating Officer or Social Worker to monitor the progress of the case and act on any advice given. Details of contacts made should be recorded chronologically on the Safeguarding Children Case File.

16. Ask for an update from the H.S.E./ AN Garda Síochána/ PSNI/ DHSSPS about the outcome of their investigations; this request should be made in writing.

17. Conduct an internal investigation at the conclusion of any external investigation or where no such investigation takes place. Any internal investigation will be initiated in cases where Safeguarding Children concerns remain or where disciplinary action needs to be considered. Such an investigation will gather and assess available information from all sources and witnesses. Every effort should be made, in consultation with the H.S.E./ AN Garda Síochána/ PSNI/ DHSSPS, to avoid the necessity to interview child witnesses for the purposes of disciplinary inquiries. This investigation (which takes place after the statutory enquiries have been completed) should be conducted expeditiously, taking no longer than three months, wherever possible. In cases where there is a delay, and particularly where a Priest or religious has been temporarily removed from active ministry or an employee or volunteer has been suspended from duties, it is important to keep everyone informed of the progress of the investigation and to maintain records of such communications. There can be no excuse for a respondent being left uninformed and 'in limbo' indefinitely. Where an investigation concerns Clergy or religious, the requirements of Canon Law will be observed. Canonical investigations will be carried out by the Blessed Sacrament Congregation after the statutory investigation is completed.

Receiving Allegations and Disclosures of Abuse Applies to: All Blessed Sacrament Fathers, Brothers and all our staff and volunteers

- Listen:
- Ensure the Child Protection Recording Form is completed (Appendix 2)
- Refer: The matter to the Local Safeguarding Representative.
- The Blessed Sacrament Congregation is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of children and takes seriously all disclosures, allegations and suspicions of abuse.
- This procedure sets out the action that must be taken where there has been a disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, whether current or historical. The procedure applies whether the information regarding child abuse relates to Blessed Sacrament personnel .
- Initial Contact Procedure It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse so it is important to make sure that you are patient, listen carefully and actively, and create a safe environment in which the person feels able to speak openly. This approach can help reassure the person who has made the difficult decision to come forward to make an allegation or

voice a concern about abuse. It will also help ensure that relevant information is made available to those whose responsibility it is to investigate the alleged incident(s).

- People may tell you about: - abuse that is happening now; - abuse that happened in the past; - an allegation of abuse that has been made to them by a third party; - having seen signs of abuse, such as an indication of physical injury; - having witnessed something that has caused them to feel concerned that a child is being or has been abused.
- Where information is given in person or by telephone:
 1. Stay calm, take seriously what the person is saying, and reassure them that they have done the right thing in coming forward.
 2. Listen carefully to what the person is saying; allow the person to continue at his or her own pace. Some facts are only ever told once.
 3. The information given must be fully and accurately recorded.
- If you find that the information disclosed shocks, distresses or disgusts you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may upset the person giving the information and inadvertently dissuade him or her from giving any further information.
- Remember it is not your role to investigate, so do not ask probing, intrusive or leading questions. It is the role of the civil authorities to do this.
- Check that you have an accurate understanding of what was actually said. If necessary, ask the person to clarify. Do not suggest words, but use theirs.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept. Do not promise 'not to tell anyone' or say 'you'll keep it a secret' but listen carefully to what is being sought. Information will be treated with all possible confidentiality.
- Do not make any comments on the incident(s) being reported, and do not make any statement about believing or not believing what the person has said. Do not make any comments about the person or persons against whom the allegation is being made.
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language and range of vocabulary.

- Explain to the person concerned what will happen next, including the procedures for referral to the civil authorities. Give the person the contact details of the Designated Liaison Person in case he or she wishes to make direct contact with the Designated Liaison Person.

Record Keeping

Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information.

Where it is not appropriate to make notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards and in any case before the end of the day.

The following data will be required:

The time, date and location of where and when the allegation or disclosure was made to you:
The time(s), date(s) and location(s) of alleged incidences.

Record whether the allegation was made or the suspicion raised in person or by telephone or in writing. Where the report is made in person, record the names of those who were present.

Further information required:

- a. accurate identifying information, as far as it is known. This should include the name, address, telephone number and date of birth of the person who raised the concern or made an allegation.
- b. if a child raised a concern or made an allegation, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of their parent(s) or guardian(s) should be obtained and recorded
- c. the name of the individual against whom an allegation has been made or a concern raised, as well as any other identifying information.
- d. the statement of the person who has made an allegation or voiced a suspicion, recording as far as possible, everything they have said regarding the alleged or suspected abuse.

Do not select what is to be recorded – a detail which may seem irrelevant may be in fact significant.

- In so far as is possible, record the words the person themselves used in making the allegation or voicing their suspicion.

-Record also any views or comments they expressed regarding the alleged or suspected abuse.

- No assumptions or comments should be made regarding the intended meaning of the words used.

In the case of a suspicion of abuse, record full details about the circumstances that led to the suspicion, including relevant date(s).

- record if action has already been taken on this allegation

- have any views been expressed by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) about the matter?

The record should be signed and dated by the author. This initial record will form the first entry in a file of information about the case which will be forwarded to the Designated Liaison Person.

All original records, including rough notes, must be passed immediately to the Designated Liaison Person.

Referral of Disclosures, Allegations and Suspicions

1. All disclosures, allegations and suspicions of child abuse should be brought to the attention of the Local Safeguarding Representative without delay. The Representative will then liaise with the Designated Liaison Person as soon as possible. The Designated Liaison Person has the responsibility for reporting disclosures, allegations and suspicions of abuse to the statutory authorities (the HSE and An Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland and the PSNI and the local DHSSPS in Northern Ireland).
2. In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, a report should be made directly and without delay to the statutory authorities. (The Designated Liaison Person should be informed without any delay)

Confidentiality

The person who comes forward with a disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse should be assured that the information will be treated with all possible confidentiality and that it will be revealed only to the statutory authorities with responsibility for safeguarding children and to those within the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament with specific responsibilities for safeguarding children.

Respect and due regard to both parties will be shown both to the person making the complaint and the subject of the complaint.

The person who encounters an allegation or suspicion of child abuse must not discuss this information with anyone other than those specified in these procedures. Additional Specific Guidance - Seal of Confession: If you are a priest, you must be clear about the status of any conversation in which a disclosure of child abuse is made. Make sure there is no misunderstanding about whether the Seal of Confession applies.

Anonymous allegations: Allegations or concerns about child abuse that are raised by a person who wishes to remain anonymous are to be treated carefully. Anxiety or fear may cause some people not to reveal their identity immediately. It is difficult to act on information unless at some point the name of the person raising a concern or making an allegation becomes known. The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity will restrict the ability of professionals to access information or to intervene to protect a child. Openness as far as possible should be encouraged.

Training Needs

In order to maintain high standards and good practice, all personnel should be offered training in safeguarding children. There are opportunities for all personnel to develop and maintain the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to keep children safe. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively they need to be aware of safeguarding children issues and to have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.

Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice are available. Members of the Congregation and those with whom we work, where necessary, will avail themselves of the programmes provided by the Diocese or the National Board.

Fr Peter Dowling sss
Provincial Superior

November 2016