



The Bishop of Norwich
The Rt Revd Graham Usher

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

12th November 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

The abuse perpetrated by John Smyth and the life-long trauma this has caused for survivors, here and in Africa, is unimaginable. The [Makin Review](#) and subsequent media coverage will have affected them and others by triggering painful memories of abuse.

I am writing now to ask you to pray for all those affected and to ask you to take care of yourselves and each other as we all digest this report.

There has been much scrutiny of Archbishop Justin, which led to his [resignation statement](#). The report has much to say about a range of failings in safeguarding and about cultures and theologies within the Church that propagated such abuse and then covered it up. Our task is not finished and there are many recommendations that stem from the Review. I am determined, both in the House of Bishops and in this diocese, to do all I can, through policy development and independent scrutiny, training and my own practice, to enable God's church to be a safe place for everyone.

Those we serve in the parishes, chaplaincies and schools of this diocese need us more than ever to be committed to safeguarding, supporting our Parish Safeguarding Officers and our Diocesan Safeguarding Team. This Sunday is [Safeguarding Sunday](#). It is an important time to preach and pray about the work of safeguarding in our church: specifically, that it is everyone's responsibility, and an integrated culture of safeguarding is part of what we do because it is Gospel work and a Kingdom value.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 13.1-8) Jesus reminds us of the fallibility of all things. It is a reminder of the myth of the flawless leader who, because of their charisma or preaching, can't possibly do anything wrong or inappropriate. None of us should be beyond accountability, criticism or reproach.

Above all at this time, please look out for those who might have been harmed in any way and seek their wellbeing. Helpful links for support for yourself or someone you know are [here](#).

Bishop Jane and Bishop Ian share the sentiments I have expressed in this letter.

May God bless us with courage to do the right thing for all whom we seek to serve in the name of Christ.

+ Graham Usher