

Message to Clergy and Parishioners

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I write to you with deep regret and a sense of shame. Sadly, I need to inform you that following a criminal trial a priest of our Archdiocese, Fr. Joseph Quigley, has been found guilty of serious offences against a child victim. The offences took place between 2006 and 2009. Fr. Quigley has been remanded in custody facing sentence in January.

Our first response must be prayers for those who have suffered as a consequence of Fr. Quigley's actions. I thank those who have come forward to give evidence for their courage in testifying.

All of us in the church are called to care for others. The abuse of trust by a priest adds to our feelings of horror and revulsion towards the criminal actions that have been proved in this case.

The Archdiocese became aware of allegations in 2012 that eventually led to this trial. The Archdiocese informed the police and statutory authorities of the allegations then. Fr. Quigley was removed from public ministry and has not been in public ministry since 2012.

The Archdiocese has co-operated fully with the police, with the statutory authorities and with the trial process. I assure you, the Archdiocese will always co-operate fully with statutory agencies and the police with regard to allegations of abuse.

Fr. Quigley will now face church disciplinary processes that acknowledge the seriousness of his offences.

These terrible events will be a shock to everybody but especially to those who have known Fr. Quigley. Please be assured of my prayers for all who are affected by this news.

I also pray for Fr. Quigley and for those who are close to him. Justice must be done but that does not stop us following our Lord in ministering to those who have done serious wrong.

Above all, though, I pray for those who have suffered because of abuse and I would invite you to do the same.

The Archdiocese is committed to best practice in safeguarding, offering a compassionate response to victims/survivors of abuse. All who have suffered or may be suffering abuse are encouraged to report the matter to the police and, if appropriate, to the Archdiocese of Birmingham Safeguarding Team on 0121 230 6240 or by email: safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk.

Please be assured of my continued prayers and my kindest wishes as Advent unfolds.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a small cross followed by the name 'Bernard' in a cursive script.

Archbishop Bernard Longley