



Mr Vincent Doyle
Coping International

24 October 2017

Dear Mr Doyle

Children of Priests

Thank you for your correspondence about the children of Catholic Priests. I am writing to set out the approach that has been adopted by the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM).

The PCPM was established by Pope Francis to advise him on the protection of children and vulnerable adults in the Catholic Church. It does not have powers to direct any part of the Church either at the local level or at the central level. It does not deal with individual complaints. The PCTM does provide advice to Pope Francis directly for his consideration in taking decisions relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The PCPM is involved in advising the local churches – that is Bishops Conferences and Religious Superiors – on good practice in safeguarding and is also involved in a wide range of educational initiatives on safeguarding at national and international levels. The PCPM currently has working groups of members looking at specific subject areas. One of those groups is known as the Guidelines Group. This group has, for example, developed a template for Guidelines on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Abuse to assist Bishops Conferences in their development of Guidelines.

At the most recent meeting of the PCPM it was decided that the Guidelines Working Group should consider the development of guidelines on Children of Priests. I am currently the Chair of that working group and it is in that capacity that I am replying to you. We are just beginning that work. We will be looking at any existing guidance on this issue such as the recent statement by the Bishops Conference of Ireland and working with the various departments of the Curia in Rome which have responsibilities related to this issue. As you have pointed out it is a complex issue which needs careful consideration. I am not able at this stage to give you a timetable for our work on this, but I want to assure you that we consider this to be a very important area of work for the PCPM.

Your work in highlighting this issue has been very helpful indeed. If you have any information or suggestions which you consider would assist us in this work I would be glad to receive them.

With very best wishes

Chair, Guidelines Working Group