

# The Bishop in Canterbury

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Dear colleagues,

In this season of Lent we are bound to reflect on the many ways in which as Christians we fall short of the perfection God wishes for us.

In this Lent of 2018 there is a particular area of failure on which we will be called to reflect and repent: our failures as a Church, over many decades, to protect children from sexual abuse; and our failures as a Church to listen and respond well to the voices of those children, whether contemporaneously or as adults, in seeking justice and redress for the abuse they have suffered.

At the last General Synod in February there was a [safeguarding presentation](#) during which the four speakers clearly outlined the challenges we face as a Church as we approach the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, ('[IICSA](#)'). The Anglican Church in England and Wales is one of IICSA's 13 investigations and this Monday (March 5) IICSA will start three weeks of public hearings about the Church, focusing on the Diocese of Chichester as a case study. Archbishop Justin was one of those who originally called for this inquiry. This investigation is a necessary examination that the Church fully supports.

It will be a difficult time for all of us in the Church when survivors, who have been brave in coming forward, will share their stories, and church officers will be called as witnesses. We must listen to survivors' voices, acknowledge and repent for where we have got it wrong in the past, and seek to learn lessons for the future, whilst also focusing on the important safeguarding work going on in our churches every day of the year.

I would like to thank all those who are leading that work in our churches, chaplaincies and worshipping communities, including all the volunteers who support it, especially our Parish Safeguarding Officers. I would also like to acknowledge the immense amount of hard work carried out by our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and diocesan safeguarding teams to ensure that we continue to promote a safer Church for all.

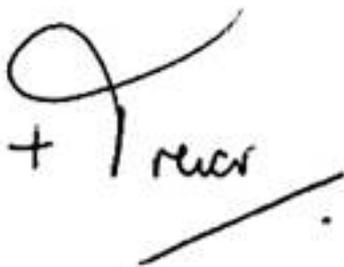
If you have any questions or comments about the work of IICSA or the issues that it will be considering, please do not hesitate to contact the [Safeguarding Team](#) or [Anna Drew](#) (07753454586), who will be receiving daily updates during the three-week hearing from the National Safeguarding Team. For more information, there is [this Q&A](#) for parishes, provided by the national team.

Furthermore, if any of this raises issues which you would value talking about, please be assured that there is someone to listen to you. Our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers are a good first port of call – [find their details here](#).

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is not an add-on issue for the Church, but a crucial aspect of our culture and life together. It is about the Kingdom of God and about us, as followers of Jesus Christ, joining in with God's mission of transformation and reconciliation.

I ask that in this season of Lent - and beyond - we all pray for any who are vulnerable and those within our care.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink. It features a large, stylized initial 'I' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. Below the 'I' is a plus sign followed by the word 'rears' in a cursive script. A diagonal line is drawn across the bottom of the signature.