

# **Safeguarding Sunday Sermon**

**by The Reverend Canon Andy Delmege,  
Canon Missioner of Birmingham Cathedral**

This sermon is for Safeguarding Sunday, so I need to begin with a trigger warning for anyone for whom this might be an extremely difficult subject. If you need to speak to someone as a result of this, the clergy are available, or speak to Steph or Anna our Cathedral Safeguarding Officers (full details of how to contact them are on the website).

Before we reflect on safeguarding, can I say what a pleasure it is to welcome any visitors who are here with Pride – LGBTI+ people are such a key part of the community here.

So, Safeguarding. As a cathedral we seek to be a place that is safe for everyone, and in which everyone might flourish. This means we are doing our best to create a culture of safety – to be a place in which everyone, especially children, young people and anyone else can feel and be safe. Why do we do this? Simply because it is the Gospel. We see Jesus' concern for the little ones in our reading today – the vulnerable, the neediest in society, and we remember that in that time, children were the least, they had no place, no power, no status, no importance. Our faith in Christ, in God who is Love, means that we believe that every person has the right to feel safe all of the time. We do well to hear Jesus' anger with those who would damage others.

Ensuring the safety of all, especially those least able to look after themselves, has some consequences for us as individuals and as a community. All our staff and volunteers undergo suitable safeguarding training (if you don't do it, you can't volunteer or work at the cathedral). We have recently had an independent safeguarding audit of the cathedral. You can read it and our action plan to respond to its findings on the website.

One of the main reasons we are spending ourselves on this is that the Church of England has often been poor in ensuring vulnerable people are safe. We will all know the appalling stories of sexual, domestic, spiritual and other kinds of abuse; how the Church has put itself before the needs of survivors. I am angry, upset and embarrassed by the Church. As an institution, we need to change – quickly.

We are determined to do everything we can to ensure Birmingham Cathedral is a safe place for all of us. If you see or notice anything which concerns you, please report it. If you are worried about anything, please find someone you trust and tell them. If anyone tells you anything, please report it to Steph or Anna. Their contact details are available via the website or on our safeguarding posters displayed at the back of the cathedral.

As part of our continuing journey to be a safe and welcoming space for all, we will be giving out a simple questionnaire next Sunday and there will be an opportunity to reflect on this in more detail at Community Day.

Safeguarding Sunday gives us an opportunity to renew our vision of why we want to keep one another safe, and to ensure we are doing all we can to do this. Let's carry on deepening our commitment to it and to one another