

## MESSAGE TO LAY FAITHFUL AND CLERGY

Today, Thursday 21st December 2023, we learned that Rev Patrick Smythe had appeared in court charged with further offences of the sexual abuse of minors. The charges relate to the period between 1976 and 1989. He has pleaded not guilty and is scheduled to stand trial 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

Once again, our first thoughts must be for all the victims who suffered abuse at the hands of Patrick Smythe, who have had to carry the pain of what happened to them throughout their lives over many years. The court process is likely to cause them further trauma and distress. Please pray for them as they seek to find healing.

Without pre-judging the outcome of these new charges, many like me will experience a renewed shame and anger for the immense harm inflicted on individuals, families, and communities, by any form of sexual abuse. That anger and shame is compounded when such abuse is committed by a member of the clergy, someone who is meant to be in a position of trust.

We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of every child, young person and adult at risk in the Diocese of Leeds. Abuse of any kind should be reported to the Police, and any abuse reported to the Diocese is referred to the police and other relevant statutory authorities.

**Right Reverend Marcus Stock**  
**Bishop of Leeds**

If you have any support needs or safeguarding concerns, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, Ms Mary Kearney, Email: [safeguarding@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dioceseofleeds.org.uk) or Tel: 07515 598523.