

Sexual abuse by the clergy is a true “scandal”. It is an obstacle to belief and undermines the work of the Church in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. It could be argued that the greatest obstacle to preaching the gospel

The people of the Diocese too have suffered, and are suffering now, along with the Church throughout Scotland, as the negative publicity which is a fallout from the trial is not only embarrassing to Catholics but also calls into question the trust they have in their priests.

When the first allegations were made over twenty years ago, they were reported to the police, but it has taken until now for the case to come to court. This has added to the agony of the victims. I do hope that despite the trauma of having to go to court they take some comfort from the verdict. I would like to offer my personal apology to the victims: I am deeply saddened and pained by the abuse they have suffered, particularly since the one guilty of abuse is a priest of Galloway Diocese.

This abuse may have happened decades ago but the victims who suffered then are still suffering now, since such abuse has long term consequences. It is difficult to know how to help these victims, and indeed all who have survived abuse, but we must make it a priority to do so. The damage done is often also spiritual damage destroying their faith in the Church and perhaps even their faith in God.

It is now three years since I became Bishop of Galloway Diocese. In that time there have been two priests sent to prison. One for financial irregularities and now Fr. Paul Moore for the much more serious matter of sexual abuse, including that of a five year old child.

My Dear People,

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