

Message from the Archbishop, 2nd October 2014

Dear Sisters,
Dear Brothers,

As you know, on Tuesday last we had to announce that a priest of our Archdiocese had turned himself in to the police authorities. Several years ago, this priest sexually abused a young person, who was a minor at the time these morally and legally reprehensible acts were committed.

It is now up to the appropriate judicial bodies to determine the extent to which child and youth protection legislation applies to one who has culpably infringed the provisions of the law. For its part, the Church has also laid down directives in this area. Pursuant to the rules of the Universal Church, this case will be duly forwarded to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which is the body with jurisdiction to deal with such matters.

My first thoughts and concern are directed towards the victim. My heart is full of immense grief, and I ask each and every one of you, who are the Church in Luxembourg, to pray for that person. Their life has become harder on account of what has happened. They need to be made aware of God's closeness to them, and that we, as Church, are also there for them.

At this difficult time, I wish also to address all the children and young people. Your physical and spiritual integrity have at all costs to be respected. You are so important for the Church! Know that you can go on trusting your priests and pastoral workers. I want you to be able to live your faith freely in the Church, without fear of abuse. My plea to parents, who initially may feel destabilized and let down, is that they go on showing their confidence.

I wish also to ask for your prayers, dear Brothers and Sisters, for this priest who has fallen and sinned. On the one hand, the Church must do everything to ensure that justice is done. On the other hand, we must be grounded in the Gospel of forgiveness and mercy. Justice must be allowed now to take its course. Where the priest is concerned, we may pray for him and not leave him alone with his wrongdoing.

Our Church is being shaken by strong tremors, from without and from within. Let us not allow these difficult moments rob us of the hope and joy of our faith. This period of sadness for our Church can help us rather to an even greater cohesion during this time of trial.

Your Bishop
+ Jean-Claude

Luxembourg, October 2nd, 2014