

Today is Child Protection Sunday. Society has become more conscious of the need to ensure that children have a right to a safe and nurturing environment – whether that be in the home, school, parish, sporting club or other institution. One of the most painful experiences of recent times has been the revelations of sexual abuse within the church and its cover up. On a positive note, great strides have been made to address this evil.

We should acknowledge the important work of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse in institutions. Its wide mandate has enabled it to investigate all institutions – government and non government where children have been the victims of abuse. Its forthcoming recommendations should help put in place structures and procedures that will prevent past failures. However, it is outside of the scope of the commission to address children at risk in homes and families.

Children will always remain at risk. Sadly, there will always be those who prey upon and exploit the vulnerable. So the word 'protection' is apt and necessary and indeed, it is a duty of parents and all who are entrusted with the care, growth and development of children.

If we take child protection seriously then by way of extension this must apply to every child in every situation – from the child in the womb to the vulnerable children of asylum seekers. Children incarcerated in places such as Nauru remains a blight upon our nation and its failure to provide the adequate care and protection of these children.



It is important that we recognize and appreciate the role of fatherhood as we celebrate Fathers Day. My prayers and blessings are with all the dads today.

***Peace & blessings,  
Gerard***