



MEETING
THE PROTECTION OF MINORS IN THE CHURCH
Vatican, February 21-24, 2019

A meeting in solidarity, humility, and penitence

“If one member suffers, all the members suffer together” (1 Cor 12:26)

This past week the Holy Father called a meeting in the Vatican to discuss the theme 'The Protection of Minors in the Church.'

This is certainly a first meeting of its kind, yet it is also clearly part of the process of *synodality* that Pope Francis is keen to have at the heart of his plan to reform the Church. Faced with a problem that shows itself more and more present and serious in different geographical areas of the world and of the Catholic Church, the pope has ordered the highest representatives of the different ecclesial communities to give a united response at the universal level. The entire Church must choose to live in solidarity, above all with the victims, with their families and with the ecclesial communities wounded by the scandals. As the pope has written, 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer together' (1 Cor 12:26), and the commitment to protect minors has to be taken on clearly and effectively by the entire community, starting with those in the highest positions of responsibility.

Speaking of sexual abuse by members of the clergy is painful and unpleasant. Sometimes, even in Church circles, one hears that it is time to change the subject, that it is not right to give too much weight to this theme, for it is becoming oppressive and overblown. But that would be the wrong road to take. If the problem is not fully confronted in all its aspects, the Church will continue to find itself facing one crisis after another, her credibility and that of all priests will remain seriously wounded, but above all, what will suffer will be the substance of her mission to proclaim the gospel and her educational work for children and young people, which for centuries has been one of the most beautiful and precious aspects of her service for humanity.”

In consciousness of the facts, the meeting sees itself as a step on a long path of reappraisal, healing and transformation of the Church, which must always be a transformation towards a deeper, more wholehearted following of Jesus Christ.

The homepage (www.pbc2019.org) was established to be able to transparently and authentically follow the process of change and development, both during the meeting and thereafter. Thus, beyond February 2019, it should be traceable what stimulus has come from within and outside of the meeting for the protection of minors, and how this has been implemented and/or developed further. All participants are aware of the fact that it must not remain mere words and announcements. Specific action must follow. Everyone can use this homepage to form their own opinion on whether and how this will succeed in future.