

Pastoral Report from Isaiah Journey

September 2020 – September 2022

Isaiah Journey, formerly Let's Be Honest Group

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Current status

- 1.1 Following the initial period of 2 years, a review of the purpose of *Let's Be Honest* group took place and its Terms of Reference were externally revised. Some members finished their term of office and moved forward to new ministries. Other members joined. After a period of prayer and reflection, a new name was discerned to mark the next steps – *The Isaiah Journey*.
- 1.2 **As a working group of the Bishops' Conference, the threefold purpose of Isaiah Journey is:**
 - 1.2.1 To resource and support the spiritual care and accompaniment of victims and survivors and anyone affected by sexual abuse in the Church
 - 1.2.2 To work alongside the Church's formal safeguarding agencies to promote training in safeguarding as a fundamental ministry of every baptized person – rooted in the Gospel and teaching of Jesus and informed through listening to survivors
 - 1.2.3 To assist with the journey towards healing for all, including communities affected by abuse.

2. Isaiah Journey Membership and Consultors

2.1 Drawn from 'experts by experience' across three areas: survivors of clerical abuse; theological and pastoral skills, and safeguarding and protection expertise.

- Rt Rev David Oakley (Chair)
- Caroline Dollard (Convenor)
- Martin Foster
- Kathryn Turner
- Elizabeth Ridley
- Marie O'Donnelly
- Sebastian Carro
- Sr Ellen Flynn

Why Isaiah Journey?

SEEKING TRUTH: the prophet describes himself as 'A voice of one calling, 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord' (40:3) This invites us all on a journey to face the truth of the anguish of those impacted by abuse. In LISTENING, we begin the work of preparing a way for God's healing.

BRINGING HOPE: Isaiah gives the words which Jesus uses at the beginning of his ministry: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me ...to proclaim good news to the poor" Jesus embodies the words and we as baptised members of His Body, are called and anointed to do the same.

FINDING HEALING: Isaiah writes that the Messiah is a healer 'A bruised reed he will not break'. Many in the church have been broken; their faith extinguished. Together we seek to acknowledge the immense harm, and with renewed trust, to believe in God's power to bring healing and hope to victims, survivors, families, communities

*We are grateful to former members who remain as consultors:
Rev Eugene Curran; Louise Carter, Danielle Dixon; Frances Healy*

2.2 The Isaiah Journey group meets 4 or 5 times a year, and in addition a core group are in regular contact and meets for reflection and planning. IJ meetings begin and end with *lectio divina* and reflection time. Individual members bring insights from their personal spheres of life, ministry and study. These feed into the teasing out of human-spiritual possibilities for responding to the needs of victims and survivors, family members, community members, including the vast range of people on the periphery impacted by abuse in the Church. And ultimately, into the creation of IJ resources.

3. Interim period of Discernment and on-going Learning

3.1 **The Spring 2021 external revision of the terms of reference** for the group by bishops' conference and national safeguarding staff was unsettling. Nonetheless, it did provide members with a natural breathing space, and time to pray and reflect on the experience of the group to date, its working relationships, and the quality of its resources; and to engage in further theological reflection, study and conversations, all of which inspire the direction of travel. However, its existence is fragile. It will remain challenging to sustain this work, and develop resources to a high standard, with '21st Century accessibility' with no funding or other support.

3.2 Relationships & conversations in a spirit of support & collaboration

- Sr. Ellen Flynn, member of the IJ group, enables a continuing conversation with Conference of Religious and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service
 - *"Having been involved with CoR and the RLSS for some time and having recently signed up to the CSSA in my congregation, I applaud the determination of these organisations to set robust standards. Their necessary emphasis on compliance must be accompanied by the spirituality and compassionate pastorality of the church. This is what Isaiah Journey brings, and without it the gap would be huge. Collaboration and holistic vision is of the essence. The work of IJ must be better known and valued. I am privileged to be part of it"*
- Sr. Tina Campbell has shared her experience, first as director for Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland, and currently in the Promotion of Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP), with the Jesuits Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, Rome
 - *"...Just to let you know, I am using the prayer when I am teaching the Licentiate in Safeguarding here in Rome."*
- Barbara Thorp (formerly Archdiocese of Boston, pastoral team) has been a core adviser from her experience in Boston
 - *"... I am utterly amazed and inspired by your gritty determination to carry on with your group of seven, now on the Isaiah Journey. The fire of the Holy Spirit burns brightly within you, that's for sure. I opened up the 2022 resource link, and yes, while (as you have said) it may be a bit lacking in presentation, the content is filled with so much heart and tenderness. I can't believe all you have pulled together with so little support..."*

- Philip Robinson, RE Adviser to the Catholic Education Service
 - *..“This (IJ) resource looks excellent and timely. I will share with RE advisers. I have also copied in my line manager, Catherine Bryan who works with school leaders and CEOs through the work of Formatio. I suspect it will be of most use to people in leadership positions”.*
- Antonia Sobocki, LOUDFence project - <https://survivorsvoices.org/loudfence/> has been an encouraging voice for ‘the art of the possible’ in getting conversations going at local diocesan level. *(See later in this report.)*
- Dr. Alessandra Campo (Institute of Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care (IADC), Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. <https://iadc.unigre.it/> Having sent Dr.Campo our resources for the last couple of years, she has kindly expressed interest in seeing how Isaiah Journey project develops, especially in spiritual journeying with victims, but has not been actively involved with IJ. We keep in touch.

3.3 Theological and pastoral wisdom: conversation, seminars that inform IJ

- Dr. Pat Jones
 - *“I’m particularly glad to know that the LBH group is continuing; it is such important work, and even if you cannot fill the gap in pastoral support as much as you would like, **it matters to keep saying that the gap is there**”.*
- Dr. Clare Watkins
 - *“... how encouraging it is to see this work being done, and – especially – with a **real sense of the importance of theology and spirituality for all church people in looking steadily at, and responding lovingly to, these traumatic realities**. I am aware of the Boundary Breaking project in Durham, especially through Pat Jones and Catherine Sexton, and together with this CBCEW initiative I feel more hopeful than for a very long time that we will find ways of breaking open this part of our church experience to God’s grace – even though we cannot see what, exactly, this might look like”.*
- Professor Jim McManus: IJ have been looking at Professor McManus’s work for healing and hope, in resilience, trauma & pastoral recovery, and the theology of safeguarding, with a view to inviting Professor McManus to further inform our progress and ministry, including formation for prayer guides in the impact of trauma on survivors of abuse.
 - https://www.academia.edu/6003951/towards_a_theology_of_safeguarding and <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/resilience-trauma-and-pastoral-recovery/>
 - *‘A church which is unsafe cannot claim to be one, holy, catholic, or apostolic. It is a core value of the church to nurture children and care for vulnerable adults... Sexual abuse disrupts a sense of being loved by God, a sense of community with others, and trust in God’s plan and purpose for the future’...*

- Professor Gill Goulding CJ – having been inspired by Professor Goulding’s theology and insights in **‘The Forgotten Dimension’**^{1*} (written for bishops, in support of forming a response to the abuse crisis) the IJ group wishes to engage in further deep reflection, and Professor Goulding has kindly agreed to lead us in a conversation (the group and invited guests) as to how her theological insights can be embedded in our pastoral practice in England & Wales (Autumn 2022).
 - * *“I suggest that within the Christian faith tradition there are theological resources that may be re-appropriated that bring life-giving insights not found elsewhere. In order to access these, it is important that we acknowledge that sexual abuse is not just wrong or sinful (of course it is) but that it profoundly wounds both those who are abused and the body of Christ. At its heart it is a profanation of the very person of Christ. It is Jesus himself who asserts this reality “whatever you do to the least You do to me”. It is Christ, the eternal child of the Father, who is desecrated by the action of abuse. When we glimpse this most profound truth, by the grace of God, there is the possibility of ongoing conversion and a process of healing”.* **The Forgotten Dimension**

3.4 IJ Reflection and Learning: In this context of a developing theology of **childhood**, hitherto rather overlooked as an ‘unnecessary’ or unimportant subject for theological debate, **we have reflected further on the meaning of intimacy, and the devastating spiritual, emotional impact of abuse**, especially when perpetrated by a member of the Church.

- **In the experience of abuse**, the foundational nature and quality of the child or vulnerable adult’s relationship with God and their God-given dignity and belonging is trampled on, minimized, even dismissed; the perpetrators of abuse have, through their evil intent, been blinded to the Gospel imperative given by Jesus to receive and welcome, love and care for children, and be patient enough to learn from children about God.
- **In the context of theology and spirituality being lived out in communities**, the church, over centuries, has paid lip service to family love and intimacy as a reflection of God’s love. Children have been invisible, silent, empty vessels, often not counted as present or worthy. The question or paradox of becoming ‘like a child’ (Matthew 18.3) as a condition for ‘entering the kingdom of heaven’ has not been deeply ‘lived with.’ Therefore the devastating impact of abuse has not truly emerged and been recognised by everyone, to the point of some saying *‘it’s not as bad as you think it is.’*²

¹ Received for reflection and conversation, via Bishop David Oakley, Chair of Isaiah journey. See <https://podcasts.apple.com/sk/podcast/bgt12-unless-you-become-like-this-child-with-sr-gill/id1496024718?i=1000490270484&l=sk> Sr Gill Goulding on Balthazar and progress towards full spiritual childhood.

² See Jerome W Berryman, founder of Godly Play, Berryman, J. W. (2013). *The spiritual guidance of children: Montessori, Godly Play, and the future*. New York: Morehouse Publishing and

- **Hope for any healthy integrated, human-spiritual development and healing for survivors is constantly being de-railed**, and it takes humble, sensitive, reverent, intentional, compassionate listening and accompaniment to get on track together with survivors, as companions, trusted and known³.

3.5.1 Other sources of insight and inspiration for IJ ministry with victims, survivors, families and others have come from the work held in the voices of **survivors and companions** in the Root & Branch **Stolen Lives** webinars⁴, and further, in the **secular research into post-traumatic growth**, e.g. Clinical Psychology Department, Liverpool University⁵ highlighting the possibilities for flourishing and transformation that can come for survivors when they have the right help and listening environment for speaking about their lives, being alive and surviving, and being given permission to grow because they have seen that others have grown!

3.5.2 Bible Society Navigating Trauma: IJ have been in communication with the Bible Society, Navigating Trauma Team(2021), who are now sharing their resources and training, designed to help communities dealing with any traumatic events. They are encouraging parishes and organisations who wish to work in partnership with them. <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-us/our-work/england-and-wales/navigating-trauma/>

- *Navigating Trauma is a programme for people who've experienced suffering and who still feel the effects in their lives, perhaps years later. They haven't been able to make sense of what's happened, and it still haunts them. For many there's a sense of brokenness that they can't change. But, 'The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit' (Psalm 34.18, NIV).*

4. Practical outreach ministry

Isaiah Journey has been interested in and supportive of a number of pastoral initiatives:

4.1 Healing Garden – Diocese of Northampton. Isaiah Journey members attended the Opening of the Healing Garden, in the grounds of Northampton Cathedral. *(Note: A write-up will be on the CBCEW website shortly).* The garden provides a beautiful, prayerful space for anyone to come and walk or sit in, and be peaceful. The blessing Liturgy was enriched by an invitation to all who had gathered, survivors, families, friends, caring others, to engage in a simple but moving symbolic sign of solidarity with victims of abuse, tying a coloured ribbon on a tree. **Isaiah Journey members subsequently had the opportunity to be in conversation with Antonia Sobocki**, founder of LOUDfence UK source of the ribbon-tying action (originating in Australia).

<https://www.godlyplayfoundation.org/research/the-center> <https://www.godlyplayfoundation.org/news-and-blog/enclosing-a-space-in-which-to-be-open>

³ The Art of Accompaniment in Joy of the Gospel, page 11, para 19

https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf

⁴ https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/files/ugd/454796_57d7ad52e67b410e8fd202819518223a.pdf

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUoHgPmxLD4>

4.2 LOUDfence is a means of empowering people of faith, communities, to put into practice the values of the Gospel, reaching out to those who have been injured by abuse. It embraces the ethos of the Good Samaritan, asking us to respond to victims and survivors as we would have them respond to us. It invites those who feel locked in by the silence that shrouds abuse, to step into the liberty of openness and to celebrate the virtue of truth being spoken in the Church.

- Central to a LOUDfence event, coloured ribbons are tied to a fence or tree representing the voices and visible support of those who wish to send a humble and compassionate message of love and inclusion to those injured by abuse.
- This action challenges the stigma of abuse, and the culture of churches who have retreated from those who have been traumatised. A LOUDfence celebration is a creative step towards solidarity with victims and survivors, acknowledging that they belong as part of us, being members of our families, among our friends and neighbours, often invisible. This is a catalyst for grass roots understanding and thoughtfulness, and opportunities for listening and hopeful possibilities for building confidence and seeking mutual healing.
- **LoudFence support the collaborative planning of such events locally**, often including meetings with survivors and workshops – all supporting those harmed by abuse.
- As a direct outcome of these conversations, Bishop Oakley as Chair of IJ has spread the word to the Archdiocese of Birmingham, and the Cathedral Dean and staff are hoping to have a LOUDfence event in 2023.
- A LOUDfence event is planned for the RC Cathedral in Plymouth.
- The hope is that this initiative will spread round all the dioceses, perhaps beginning with the cathedrals.

5. Collaboration and Sharing with the new Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)

5.1 As per the July 2021 revised Terms of Reference for Isaiah Journey, Bishop Oakley invited a member of the CSSA to join the group, in the person of Sebastian Carro, the National Safeguarding Training Lead, who has been developing the CSSA learning framework to be applied across all dioceses of the Catholic Church in England & Wales.

“I had the immense privilege of being invited to be a member of the Isaiah Journey group, in which I found only the highest degree of camaraderie and support for my work, as well as many opportunities to be heard, as a professional and individual. Together, I feel we have achieved incredible milestones in the support of victims and survivors of abuse, and I am very much looking forward to continuing to work towards such a valuable task.
Sebastian Carro, CSSA

5.2 **In a spirit of mutual trust and collaboration, the Isaiah Journey group have passed on to CSSA their own pre-existing LBH/IJ pastoral & theologically focused formation module on the theological and gospel foundations for ‘Safeguarding as Ministry’** which has been central to development of *a theological and pastoral foundation* for the new CSSA framework. This

framework is password-protected, accessible to individuals and groups engaged in CSSA training, in order to facilitate training in the Safeguarding Standards.

5.3 The IJ/LBH module is therefore not available for parishes/communities/other groups searching for **pastoral resources** to support awareness-raising formation sessions for a *whole community or group*, as envisaged by Isaiah Journey. The IJ pastoral module needs to be accessible via CBCEW Isaiah Journey web pages for that purpose. Similarly, **LBH/IJ have also developed a pre-existing module on the Impact of Abuse on the whole person, body, mind and spirit**, again from a theologically sound, faith-based perspective, and as above, intended for a whole parish or community pastoral reflection process on the Church as the Body of Christ. This needs to be accessible, in interactive, attractive format, from CBCEW Isaiah Journey pages.

5.4 A new confidence in the fragile interface between safeguarding and pastoral care is hopefully growing. However, we are acutely aware of the CSSA's necessary focus on 'standards' being alongside, in healthy correlation, and sometimes in tension, with **IJ's focus** (as an episcopal conference working group), **on a theologically rooted overarching pastoral imperative:**

- Every baptized person is called to live as a member of Christ's Body, the Church, Together, inspired and guided by Christ, exercising the stewardship of grace entrusted to us, to name the truth of the wound of abuse, and hold it before God, through, with and in Christ, sharing in the burden of suffering, the outrage at the sin, the sorrow, and the task of healing the damage wrought.

6.0 National Day of Prayer launch day for annual resources

Pastoral Resources for the wounded Body of Christ, the Church, to accompany the journey of lament, healing and hope.

6.1 The aim of these resources is to deepen awareness that victims and survivors are part of our family, God's family, and that nothing we do as 'family' is just about 'me' or 'you' but it is about 'us' and who we are together in Christ. The resources seek to emphasise that when those among us, who are part of us, are wounded and hurting, and especially when some of our most trusted members have inflicted these life-scarring wounds, we are *all* affected and all responsible for healing. (1 Cor 12.26) Our victims and survivors have suffered deeply as a result of our failure as the family of God to protect them, to believe them. We include their families who also feel betrayed. We pray for affected communities and the wider church. We pray for steps towards healing.

*"I needed ordinary, gentle, patient encouragement to come to know and to find that my negative and at times all-consuming traumatic experience was not 'the biggest thing about me'. That I could get out of this destructive loop. That I could find I was not alone. That I could be free, and just 'belong' to a parish and be me, because I have been shown kindness, and more positive possibilities. I do not underestimate the power of prayer, and I thank you for yours". **Survivor***

6.2 **Each year, the Isaiah Journey group aims to produce a range of resources**, for launch in the 5th Week of Easter, in time for the National Day of Prayer for Victims of Abuse, in England & Wales, encouraging individuals, groups and communities to choose and use these resources to help them pray for and take steps a healing journey *at any time* – with victims and survivors of abuse, and their families, others deeply impacted, and the Church as a whole. IJ considers it to be **vitaly important the local Church is free to acknowledge and respond in prayer when it is able rather than restrict its prayer and support activities to just one day in the year**

6.3. **Much of the material in the Isaiah Journey resource has been written by and with survivors.** Though it is hoped that survivors will be included in the planning and action of any local initiative for reflection and prayer, this may not always be possible in the early days. Dioceses/parishes/communities are strongly encouraged to reach out to survivors and others impacted by abuse through simple signs of welcome and solidarity (e.g. a LOUDfence or similar pastoral event), and thereby grow in confidence and understanding of the survivor perspective. Through listening and building trust, and with great sensitivity, the community members and survivors can gradually become ‘active’ in preparing and celebrating the prayer and reflection events. Together, the hope is to find themselves **living out a response** to their questions and conversations that creates a safe and sacred space for all who come.

6.4 **Listener support:** Parishes and communities will know the wise and compassionate people among them who are gifted in listening. There are often trained and experienced listeners in diocese (spirituality or pastoral teams), including trained prayer guides. IJ recognize that **Resources** for prayer and liturgy can touch on powerful emotions, and therefore, the vital need for such listeners to be available and at any event, as well being accessible via ordinary community life. IJ offer a **basic guide for sensitive trauma-informed listening**, based on the principle of ‘do no harm’, to provide kind and supportive response to a fellow human being who is hurting, and when and who to refer on to for further services that others have found helpful. **Click on the links to see examples of resources for the years covered by this report.**

- **2020** <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-abuse-survivors-2020/>
- **2021 *Listening with Love*** as the central resource, survivors in conversation with each other about the impact of abuse, and reflecting on a scripture that has helped them, <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/listening-with-love/> and other prayer for that year, <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2021/>
- **2022** Paschal Mystery <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2022/> including reflection on the Paschal Candle, the Gospel of Peace, a Psalm of lament.

6.4 2022 On-line Week of Guided Prayer **Pilot**, and proposal for a National Week of Guided Prayer for survivors in 2023

6.4.1 After prayer and careful planning, IJ member Elizabeth Ridley put into action her vision to offer survivors the opportunity to experience an on-line Week of Guided Prayer (WGP).

- **The hope for the on-line WGP** is to offer an opportunity, within a safe space and pathway, for a survivor to tune into the presence of God's love within their own life. The **accompanying prayer guide** gently witnesses to the survivor's unique journey with God, and provides support and encouragement towards their own experience of wholeness, and inner peace. It may or may not also be a space where things emerge e.g. to tentatively name the impact of the abuse on their faith, their sense of their own goodness, their relationship with God, self, others, and the Church; and discover their spiritual needs/hopes and possibilities for healing.
- **Pilot week:** Supported by prayer, two experienced prayer guides and a supervisor, **the pilot week** ran on zoom, with individual participants committing to 30 minutes daily for personal time with scripture, and a meeting with their prayer guide also once a day over the first week of July 2022. The experience, albeit with small numbers, was a very sacred and fruitful one. In evaluation, participants described facing challenging questions, which in the light of their encounters with God through scripture and the gentle support of the guide, had moved into having a sense of it being a life-giving and empowering event.

A survivor participant speaks of their experience of the pilot Week of Guided Prayer:

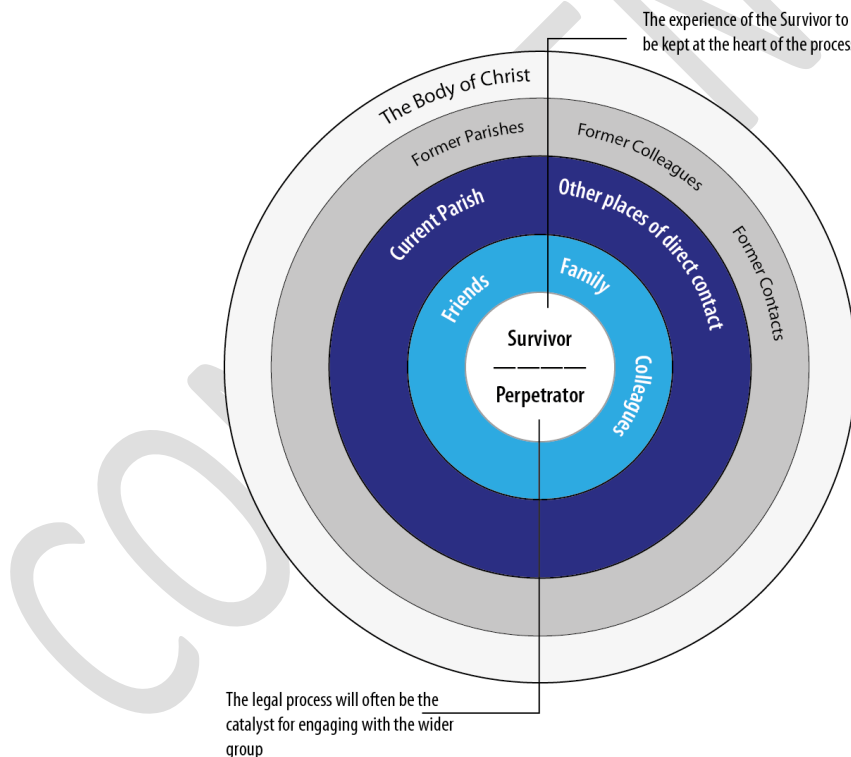
*"My injuries were inflicted on me when I was just 7 years old. Abuse strips you of the capacity to see yourself as a legitimate person with an inherent dignity as a person created in God's image. It distorts your perception of yourself and leaves you feeling inferior, tainted and somehow just never good enough. My faith, which I found as a child around this time, literally helped me to survive. **When I started the Week of Guided Prayer** I did not really know what to expect, but the experience radically transformed my perception of myself by allowing me to see that I did not have to find a way of removing the wounds to be a legitimate real human. This was done by asking me to read a passage about St Thomas' encounter with the risen Lord. I saw a painting by Caravaggio entitled the Incredulity of St Thomas and it occurred to me that Christ as the Conqueror of Death could so easily have risen from the dead with no visible wounds and yet he retained them, almost as if they are a testament to his triumph. It has allowed me to stop feeling as if I need to reverse my wounds in order to be good enough. Every time I feel the shame creeping back, I look at this picture and it helps me so much. The Week of Guided Prayer has helped me see my legitimacy as a beloved child of god in a way secular therapy in a clinical setting never could."*

6.4.2 The Week will now be extended to a **National On-line Week of Guided Prayer in May 2023**, for survivors, and opening up to others impacted by abuse, as part of IJ's national day of

prayer resources for 2023. To this end, IJ are expanding the small team of experienced Prayer Guides (with supervisors), and will provide on-line formation sessions for Prayer Guides specifically on trauma and the impact of abuse. IJ is hoping to find a small grant to cover the administrative and publicity costs for the WGP, which is free of charge for the participants.⁶

7.0 Resource 2023: 'I will make a way in the wilderness.'(Is 43.19)

7.1 The Isaiah Journey resource for 2023 marks the beginning of a new project entitled '*I will make a way in the wilderness*'. In the first year, the project is addressing the needs of the vast group of people 'on the periphery' or edge. (see Grey circle). When abuse happens, it has a devastating impact on the victim/survivor. However, through their courage in seeking to bring the perpetrator to justice, others will also experience the impact of abuse as it relates to them: circles of impact ripple out, including family and friends of the victim/survivor, parishioners, colleagues who worked with the alleged perpetrator, brothers or sisters in religious life. All these could be described as being 'on the edge.'

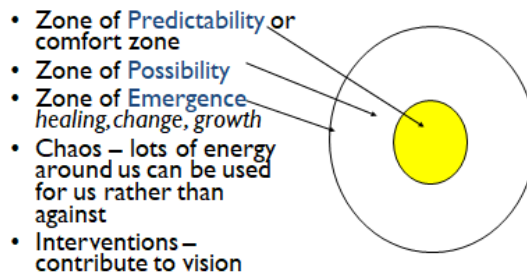


⁶⁶⁶ The WGP is a *first-steps* on-line opportunity; a commitment to 30 minutes prayer /conversation with God through scripture and a meeting with a prayer guide each day. *Grief to Grace*, also free to participants, is a residential 5-day programme of spiritual and psychological healing, using therapeutic tools from the most up-to-date psychology and treatment of trauma.

<https://www.griefftoGraceuk.org/>

7.2 The 'edge' is a good place to start 'I am making a way in the wilderness'

Complexity Theory



In our response to abuse in the Church, baptised lay and ordained together affirm again the Gospel call to move out of our 'comfort zones' and trust in God's grace as we enter zones of **new possibility**. With courage, we go further, and find ourselves in a 'zone of emergence', i.e. **it is 'on the edge' of seeming chaos that we discover new hope for change and growth and healing**. In scripture, we witness some of the most powerful actions of Christ taking place 'on the edge', *between* Samaria and Galilee, in unexpected places. This is our hope for **'I will make a way in the wilderness'** – that it will support a humble stepping-out towards new possibilities.

7.3 The catalyst for what is commonly referred to as 'the alleged abuse' becoming known will often be when the accused priest/religious is placed on administrative leave. Whether historical or recent, there are statutory investigations, alongside a process governed by the Church's own Canon Law. The process as it affects the accused most often dictate the response to those affected by the abuse - and we risk losing sight of the priority of the needs of victim and the pastoral imperatives for their care.

7.4 'I will make a way in the wilderness' seeks to shift the central focus in how the Church responds, from alleged perpetrator **to victims/survivor** – with prayer, understanding of the impact on a victim, constantly recalling and prioritising the place of the victims/survivors and their journey from disclosure to hopeful possibilities for healing. The resource highlights a process that balances consideration of the need for communication and information with the need for pastoral support and prayer – and to hold in prayer all those affected and involved in investigation and support.

7.5 The resource will grow over a number of years, beginning in 2023 with response to those **'on the edge'**, i.e. **not the victim of the abuse themselves, but those affected by an abuse**

allegation or conviction e.g. the accused is a former parish priest or a close community member; or you were deeply involved in a parish where abuse took place, often historically, or you considered yourself a friend of the accused in earlier years. It can be a divisive time in the parishes/communities affected, with many conflicting emotions. That person on the periphery can find themselves isolated, for example living in another parish or part of the country now, or moved to another community setting. They feel they have no-one to talk to, nowhere to ask questions; they struggle to understand their own emotional response, and feel they need support but have no idea where to find it. Such a person on the edge speaks:

“Recently a long-standing priest friend of mine has been tried, convicted and imprisoned for historical indecent assault on minors. I’m finding this very hard to process and have numerous questions and a whole host of emotions I’m experiencing. I’m trying to find some sort of support to help me through this but don’t think there’s much ‘out there’.... Apart from being a friend, I also worked and lived in community with this person for 5/6 years and he was a great influence on me pursuing work in the Church.

The allegations against him occurred before this but there may be other subsequent occurrences that happened elsewhere. When I think about his work in parishes and the people he got to know and who supported him in that work, I’m pretty sure there are a fairly large number of people feeling the same way – utterly bewildered and disbelieving, among many others. (Request to remain anonymous)

7.6 The on-line resource: *‘I will make a way in the wilderness’* contains:

- **Testimonies from others who** have felt ‘on the edge’ and were willing to share their experiences anonymously, enabling others to begin reflection on how they are feeling, and to find they are not alone. These testimonies are catalysts for conversation, reflection, and action.
- **Range of prayer and ritual resources** for an individual or small group (e.g. praying with landscapes, maps/characteristics of a journey; a labyrinth; simple starting prayers – using scripture mosaics, prayers of lament, prayers expressing feelings e.g. abandonment, anger & pain, but also of hope and possibility; creative response ideas (e.g. letter writing, symbolic action with candles, stones, water etc)
- **Compassionate Trauma-informed Basic Listening Guide** for friend/companion/support
- **Information about the process for the victim/survivor**, that goes in parallel to the process for an alleged perpetrator. For individual survivors, family members, but also helping communities understand what *the survivor* is going through, and allow the ‘person on the edge’ to express their confusion and mixed emotions over what they have heard and what they know.
- **Signposting for further support** – peer support, webinars, blogs
- **Adaptations e.g. for Religious Order or Seminary** groups ‘on the edge’
- **FAQ’s**

7.7. **In order to produce resources of high quality**, accessible interactively via website and social media platforms, **funding** for a part-time person with such expertise will be essential. The existing members produce good quality content, but recognize a skills gap in final presentation. *See separate item below, at 8.*

7.8 **In 2024 Stage 2: the components of Stage 1 ‘I will make a way in the Wilderness’ will be developed for a Parish Community process, beginning with initial pastoral gathering**

- **Bishop and pastor** introduce process and initial information - a pastoral parish response
- **Explore and build on idea of journey** – characteristics and landscapes, and tools for making a journey
- **Testimonies** from *parishes* ‘it was like this for us’ ‘what was useful for us’ ...
- **Witness of pastor/priest** ‘it was like this for me as pastor of community
- **Use of a now familiar ‘synodal’** process which offers a sign of hope, expressing *we are in this together*, exploring *what can we do as a community with Christ at our centre?*
 - Companions on the journey, gifts in the community (wisdom, insights, compassion, experience) to make this journey.
 - Use of scripture, silence to reflect, voice of a victim, silence.
 - Responses – what do you hear?
- **Working with complexity** – when a ‘good person’ did bad things, church as ‘holy’ and ‘sinful’ – insights from theological voices.
- **Together, closing reflection**, prayer, symbolic action
- **Next step plans** – a second pastoral gathering, exploring movement towards healing and hope (and resources to support movement and change)

8. Practical concerns – administration and funding for IJ

8.1 In order to make progress each year in the piloting and production of a range of high quality resources for parish/communities, individual pastors /companions to support their encounters with victims and survivors, families, and others impacted by abuse in the Church, **the group recognised the need for new expertise in the shape of** creative professional talent, to take the given resource content, and to assist IJ in the design, piloting, marketing, publication, and monitoring-evaluation process. Isaiah Journey resources, need to be attractive, ‘21st Century’ pastoral and training resources accessible via website/tablet/mobile/VLE’s, and including access via podcast and social media. This part-time post or external contract would need funding.

- **Between May and September 2021, IJ (LBH) were engaged in a bid for funding for a 3-year part-time post, which was successful. However, the IJ(LBH) group were unable to complete the application and accept the funding offered due to lack of legal entity willing and able to receive the money at that time (Summer-Autumn 2021).**
- **There remains an urgent ongoing need in 2022 to reapply for grant funding for a skilled project worker, and to find a legal entity and infrastructure that could receive**

the funds in support of IJ (e.g. a diocese or national organisation or religious order) in order to sustain and grow the IJ ministry/provision of resources for engagement at grass-roots level.

8.2 **The Convenor** completes a four-year term of office this September, and will be stepping down in December, in order to work locally with victims of abuse through a secular organisation. According to the Terms of Reference, the Bishop chair will appoint a new Convenor to fill this vacancy, and potentially appoint a new core group member/member(s) of IJ.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 Having been the subject of a review for our Terms of Reference, IJ is moving forward, conscious of our 'smallness' and our **extensive hopes which in summary are:**

- I. **To work within a five-year framework** for the launch of annual Isaiah Journey pastoral resources for parishes, religious communities, schools, universities, prisons, communities, to be released in January each year, giving plenty of time for planning prayer, retreat, guided retreat possibilities, alongside events focused on getting to know the local support services, counsellors, charities who work with survivors.
- II. **That the National Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse** remains a highlight, the Tuesday of the 5th week of Easter each year, with activities specifically held during that week, e.g. Week of Guided Prayer for Survivors.
- III. **That each year, the resources will be available from January**, giving parishes and religious communities and others time to plan their prayer, retreat, guided prayer events in good time. **However, resources are for a parish or community to engage with at any time** when they are able, rather than restricted to one day or week.
- IV. **To encourage use of IJ resources** as integral to developing the parish, community or school vision, knitting together the overarching pastoral-spiritual dimension with the safeguarding standards, growing a strong Gospel-faith-life connection, each community nurturing the experience of becoming a Christ-like loving, compassionate, **sacred and safe place for all.**
- V. **To use IJ resources to support/contribute to conversations that are community-led and survivor focused**, helping to break the silence and activate hearts for a compassionate Christ-like response.
- VI. **However, to produce high quality resources, IJ need funding** for creative expertise (as above, 8).

9.2 **Over the last two years**, including the period of the Covid19 pandemic, the Isaiah Journey has tentatively moved forward, seeking to be true to its new name, and the inspiration of the Prophet Isaiah in seeking truth, bringing hope and finding healing. It has not been, nor should we expect it to be an easy path. **It means to encourage honestly listening to survivors of abuse in the Church**, to really hear their pain, *respect* their 'expertise by experience', and accompany their hopes to be heard, and believed. And as a precious part of us, for survivors to receive our expression of deep sorrow for what *should never have happened* to them within the Body of

Christ. Hopefully, this leads the community deeper into their mission to becoming a safe church for everyone, and ultimately in reaching out with compassion to all victims and survivors of all forms of abuse.

9.3 In the Church and on the edge, we continue to live with uncertainty, delays, and difficulties in this ministry, and be challenged by the resilience called for. We describe ourselves as **'mother church'** and yet it can often be hard to find the traces of that intimacy, wisdom and compassion in the face of the pain of her children, of even 'good-enough' motherhood, in the structures of our Church. Change and renewing of a culture is extremely challenging, and some are fearful and may prefer to maintain the status quo. But that is not the way of Jesus.

9.4 We take courage from the successors of St Peter, today Pope Francis, who says quite clearly that **none of us are innocent bystanders**. We know that through our baptismal anointing, everyone, clergy, religious and lay together, must take responsibility for the culture that we allow to permeate our church. The members of Isaiah Journey wish to be alongside all our brother and sisters including those who are survivors, to stand ever closer to Jesus, in order to see with his eyes, and hear with his ears, and together discern ways in which we could contribute, even in the seemingly insignificant ways, to that change of culture.

9.5 Isaiah Journey are deeply grateful to all those who have been part of us, accompanied and encouraged us, especially our sisters and brothers who are victims and survivors of abuse – we continue to learn from our mistakes, fall down, get up and try again. In order to fulfil our hopes and vision to *contribute* to filling that 'spiritual and pastoral' gap in care, to even a small degree, we need visionary, open-hearted, trusting dynamic support, as alerted to in this report.

Isaiah Journey, September 2022

'In my adult life I have learned that healing does come, but slowly. At the beginning of my healing journey, I discovered that little pockets of faith remained – but they were not mediated through the priesthood or authority in any form. They were more 'quiet' than 'bright', in the silence of a candle-lit space, or even an empty church, or someone being kind. And I have read about and listened to survivors, and shared stories and impacts, which has been a source of enormous inspiration and help. Just to find you are not alone, and be assured by people ahead of you on the path that you can find ways forward to new beginnings, new possibilities, new hope for endings in the Presence of One who heals'.

(A Survivor speaks – IJ Resources 2022, Reflection on the Paschal Candle.)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn..

(Isaiah 61:1-2)

The Isaiah Journey Vision

Shifting/expanding mindsets – from 'How does this affect ME?' to 'How does this affect others?'

