DIOCESE of CHRIST our HOPE

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Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding Synod Report 2026

Rev. Canon Sergio Sapunar

1. Safeguarding
    a. I visited most Deanery Retreats to meet clergy and church leaders face-to-face, share diocesan safeguarding efforts, and hear about local needs. These conversations provided feedback to help shape our support for local churches.
    b. I worked with local churches, safeguarding staff, and volunteers across the Diocese and GPMD to clarify the safeguarding policy and support its practical implementation in church life.
    c. I also collaborated with local churches to respond to safeguarding concerns and allegations, helping them navigate relevant diocesan policies and report processes.

The Ministry Defender Solutions (MDS) safeguarding training system is implemented across the Diocese, with only a few people and churches still needing to complete it. Its standardized, on-demand format makes training accessible regardless of location or a safeguarding monitor's availability, while in-person training remains valuable.

- As in any new system implementation, we have received both positive and negative feedback. This feedback helps us identify what is working and where we need to improve.
- We recognize that parts of the training system need improvement and are working closely with the company to address them.

- As part of the training improvements, we will replace the podcast component.
- This year, we will begin creating new training videos, starting with Camp Booyah this winter. Further training videos will address settings such as youth groups, vestries, etc., and other safeguarding areas, like detecting and supporting people in cases of sexual and domestic abuse.

2. Ethics

   Peacemaking

   a. Through the RDP, I met with and listened to numerous rectors, offering opportunities to discuss concerns before they developed into more serious local-church conflicts. This preventive work remains an important part of peacemaking and potential allegations.
   b. I supported several rectors as they addressed conflicts within their churches, including situations involving the rectors directly. This support focused on helping them navigate the conflict and identify appropriate next steps to make peace.
   c. I have developed guidelines for peacemaking between laypeople and clergy. The aim is to establish clear communication channels and practical processes within our Anglican structures, helping churches address disagreements before they escalate to formal complaints. These guidelines will include online training.

3. Title IV

   a. Over the past year, I led four inquiry processes in local churches in the Diocese in support of the Bishop Ordinary. None proceeded to a canonical investigation or further discipline.

These preliminary inquiries should be distinguished from formal canonical investigations.

b. The Diocese has already established key components to support the updated Title IV, including Report Receivers, an Investigative Team, and Pastoral Care. These provide a foundation for implementing the approved canon.
c. I have also established a working relationship with the new ACNA Director of Safeguarding, Dr. Kelley Munger, to coordinate safeguarding matters.
d. With Title IV now approved, next year's project is to develop the processes and procedures needed to implement it. The goal is clear, practical guidance for complainants, respondents, local churches, and those administering the process, clarifying responsibilities and the steps involved.

In Christ,

The Rev. Canon Sergio Sapunar