



Graduation Ceremony Diploma Course in Safeguarding 2018

9 February 2018

We have come to the end of the third diploma course. It's a great achievement for the graduates, for the CCP team and all professors: congratulations! We are grateful for the support of our donors, represented today by Msgr. Beer, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Munich, and by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. We are assessing this experience and learning from our multicultural groups of students who come from very different backgrounds and circumstances, learning from the various situations between church and state in their home countries. In this way, we are working toward a deeper understanding of what a pedagogy of safeguarding can look like. It's beyond imparting information; it's "moving from the head to the heart," a positive transformation.

Over the last few months, headline news and ensuing discussions – in particular, the viral spread of the MeToo hashtag and the events that followed in the entertainment industry, in sports and in other sectors, as well as the controversy surrounding Bishop Barros in Chile – have shown that the area of sexual abuse of minors and the abuse of power and conscience still require greater understanding and a broader range of responses.

This topic is so big and so important that we need people who are creative and proactive in finding solutions. That is why we have decided last year to develop a master's program – in ecclesial terminology, a licentiate – in safeguarding, a full-time, two-year academic degree.

The kind of program we have envisaged corresponds to what was recently published in the guidelines for ecclesiastical universities, *Veritatis Gaudium*; in other words, this program will be multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary. This is possible because it is the first degree to be awarded by an ecclesiastical university as such, that is, not by an academic unit but by the university as such. This is a bold statement by the university and by the Congregation for Catholic Education, which has granted us the privilege of offering this program. We are grateful for the presence of Fr. Youssef Chédid among us, representing said Congregation.

- We will offer a platform for interdisciplinary learning for students from a variety of academic backgrounds – psychology, social sciences, theology, civil law, canon law, humanities – giving them the opportunity to learn from one another and expand their network, and nurturing their capacity to develop a bridge between sound scientific research and its application in their respective fields of expertise.

While graduates of our diploma course are equipped for executing and implementing safeguarding guidelines in their home countries, licentiate students will go further, developing their competencies, engaging in practical exploration, and independently

mastering material beyond basic formation. They will become active protagonists, developing new approaches to the legal, cultural, political, and ecclesial contexts in which they are called to safeguard minors.

We will do our best to prepare students for the challenges that lie before them. They should be considered serious sparring partners in applied science in the safeguarding field, and in many parts of the world they will be a point of reference, so the stakes are high. We pledge to do whatever we can and we ask you to support us in this exciting and long journey.

Hans Zollner SJ
President CCP