GC 2022 Statement on Safeguarding and Conflict Resolution

Each IBVM Province/Region has developed and implemented *Safeguarding Policies and Procedures* for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults and has adopted the document "Peaceful Resolution of Conflict," finalised in 2012 and reaffirmed at General Congregation 2014.

Since then there has been extensive reflection and discernment both within the Church (DICLSAL)[1] and within religious congregations on different types of conflicts and abuses of power which can occur, especially in contexts of unequal relationships. This includes not only sexual abuse but different types of spiritual, psychological and emotional abuse.

This has led to an increased emphasis on the obligation of each member of a congregation to safeguard not only minors and vulnerable adults but to recognise the wider duty of care and protection for all, including members of the congregation, based on the inherent dignity of each person.

The core values of Mary Ward – freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – are fundamental to our way of relating with one another and of resolving difficulties. The mechanism for the resolution of any conflict or situation of abuse, should seek to implement pastoral processes of reconciliation and healing and should only resort to canonical/legal processes as a last resort unless the matter is such that it requires the immediate application of legal and canonical procedures.

Each Province/Region, is required to regularly review and update their policies, procedures and structures for both safeguarding and conflict resolution, drawing on available contemporary resources. Institute Leadership requires an annual report on these. It is important that all policies, procedures and structures are clear, transparent and contextualized, and that they are known to members and co-workers, and that a competent person, or persons, be designated to review and implement them in each province/region.

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[1] DICLSAL, New Wine in New Wineskins, 2018 and *Vox Estis Lux Mundi.*