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Church has a new culture for safeguarding – Nichols

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has 'endeavoured to build a culture of safeguarding within our parishes and religious communities', Cardinal Vincent Nichols said.

The cardinal has written a statement highlighting the context and primacy of the Church's safeguarding work, in which he describes the 'evil' sexual abuse of children in the Catholic Church as 'both deeply damaging to all those who have been its victims and a scandal against the faith we strive to proclaim'.

The cardinal's comments come as the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) focused on the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The IICSA has already reported on the Archdiocese of Birmingham and on the English Benedictine abbeys of Downside and Ampleforth. A further report concerning Ealing Abbey was published last week.

'These reports have made clear the extent of failures in the Church and, more importantly, the lasting damage



to all those who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse,' Cardinal Nichols writes.

The IICSA began its investigation into the Church this week, and will continue until 8th November.

Cardinal Nichols will give oral evidence to the Inquiry on Wednesday, 6th November.

The cardinal said appearing before the inquiry will enable him to 'offer again an unreserved apology to all who have suffered in the context of the Catholic Church and to express my profound regret at all that has

taken place'. He said it will also enable him to offer assurance of the Church's willingness to learn further lessons about how to improve and strengthen its response to those who have suffered and its work of safeguarding.

He will also present an account of the Church's current work in safeguarding and the improvements which it is undertaking at this time.

'Since the independent Report of Lord Nolan in 2001, we have endeavoured to build a culture of safeguarding within our parishes and religious communities,' he writes in his letter to the clergy and people of the Diocese of Westminster.

'In our parishes there are Parish Safeguarding Representatives; in this diocese, as in every diocese, there is a Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a Diocesan Safeguarding Commission, composed of experts in the main disciplines needed for effective safeguarding.

'This Commission takes the lead in handling every allegation of abuse,

whether from the distant past or the present day. In doing so they follow nationally agreed protocols, including the swift reporting of allegations to the statutory authorities.

'There are also protocols to be followed if allegations of abusive behaviour or gross negligence are made against a bishop or leader of a religious congregation.

'We have an established National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC) with a strong majority membership of experts, who are independent of the authority structures of the Catholic Church.

'Much has been achieved. Much is to be learned.'

Cardinal Nichols said he will also be able to give evidence about more recent steps that have been taken, including his participation in the meeting in February in Rome which brought together the president of every Bishops' Conference around the world to study closely aspects of the Protection of Minors in the Church.

Thank God, he always tries for us all

Rugby hero Manu Tuilagi said the first person he thanked was God after his try had helped propel England into their first rugby world cup final for 12 years.

Tuilagi, a Catholic who currently plays rugby union for Premiership side Leicester Tigers, scored in the second minute in England's semi-final demolition victory against three-time world champions New Zealand last weekend.

Tuilagi's try helped the team secure an impressive 19-7 success over the All Blacks in Yokohama.

Amid celebrations following the win, Tuilagi, who regularly attends a Catholic church in Leicester with his baby daughter Leilani, said: "It's beyond my dreams, this. It's an unbelievable feeling. It was amazing to get through to the semis. Standing here now and we're in the final. I thank God. Thank God."

England will face South Africa in the Rugby World Cup final on Saturday 2nd November, after the Springboks earned their place in the final following their 19-16 narrow victory over Wales on Sunday, 27th October.