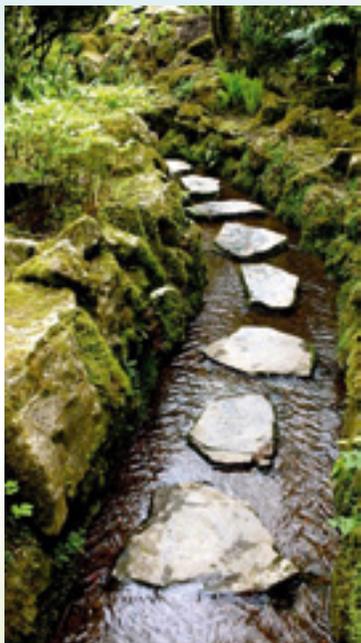




A safe space  
to connect with your sense of God  
and your own spirituality,  
with hope for a deeper peace,  
one step at a time.



### How do I contact Towards Peace?

Please contact the Towards Peace office:

Phone: 00353 (0)1 505 3028  
Mobile: 00353 (0)86 771 0533  
Email: [towardspeace@iecon.ie](mailto:towardspeace@iecon.ie)  
Website: [www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)

Postal Address: Columba Centre,  
St. Patrick's College,  
Maynooth,  
Co. Kildare,  
Ireland

# Towards Peace

Spiritual Support  
for Survivors of Abuse  
by Catholic Church Personnel  
in Ireland

I have come  
that they may have life  
And have it to the full.

*John 10:10*



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### What does Towards Peace offer?

The vision of Towards Peace is to provide a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied, as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time. There is no pre-determined roadmap on this journey. Each person travels at their own pace.

### Who is the service designed for?

Towards Peace is a service designed for those who have experienced sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse by Catholic Church personnel in Ireland. Support is also available for family members of abuse survivors.

### What is spiritual support?

Spiritual support includes ways of supporting a person's own spirituality towards fullness of life. Towards Peace understands spirituality as a way of being in and relating to the world, connected to God and one's deepest self.

### What kind of spiritual support is offered through Towards Peace?

Towards Peace provides spiritual support through one-to-one spiritual direction sessions, with a qualified spiritual companion. Up to nine sessions are offered and there is no cost.

### What is spiritual direction / spiritual companionship?

Spiritual direction, or spiritual companionship, is an ancient practice of listening and supporting, within many religious traditions. It offers a safe space for a person to attend to their own spiritual life and sense of the Sacred. Within the Christian tradition, spiritual direction particularly offers a way to tune into the presence of God's love within one's own life. The role of the spiritual companion is to witness each person's unique journey with God, and to provide support and encouragement towards their own experience of wholeness, freedom, flourishing, and spiritual peace.

### Who are the spiritual companions provided by Towards Peace?

Dispersed throughout the island of Ireland, they are a group of qualified women and men – lay people, religious sisters and brothers, and priests – from within the Christian tradition. They are committed to ongoing specialised training and responsible practice.

### What are some of the things that could be explored with a Towards Peace spiritual companion?

Feedback from abuse survivors in Ireland has highlighted the damage done to their own spirituality, particularly because they were abused by Catholic Church personnel. Within this context, spiritual direction might provide a space for exploring the spiritual impact of the abuse such as: the impact on a person's own sense of goodness; connection to God and connection to others; beliefs, theology and faith; relationship with Church and religion. Spiritual direction might also provide a space to gain clarity about what one's spiritual needs and hopes for healing are today.

### What are the origins of Towards Peace?

As part of a two year listening process, survivors of abuse met with Catholic bishops to help them understand the holistic impact of the abuse. One of the things that survivors asked for was a service offering spiritual support. Towards Peace was designed as a response to this request.

Towards Peace is one of the three services that are part of a whole Church response (local, institutional, lay, religious and clerical) to abuse in Ireland.

### The other two services are:

**Towards Healing** – Direct services to survivors through a range of counselling, psychotherapy, helpline, advocacy and restorative approaches.

Phone: 1800 303 416 (RoI) and  
0800 096 3315 (NI and UK)  
Email: [coordinator@towardshealing.ie](mailto:coordinator@towardshealing.ie)  
Website: [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

**The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland** – Advice and monitoring related to best practice and the development of policy and procedures related to safeguarding children.

Phone: 00353 (0) 1 5053124  
Email: [ann.doyle@safeguarding.ie](mailto:ann.doyle@safeguarding.ie)  
Website: [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie)

All three services are free of cost and funded by the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC), the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI), and by the Irish Missionary Union (IMU).