

CCP – 13.2.2017

It is a great pleasure for me, as the Rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University, to welcome you all at the beginning of the CCP diploma course on the safeguarding of minors.

Our University has a long history. In Rome in 1551, Saint Ignatius of Loyola opened a School of Grammar and Christian Doctrine that was very soon transformed into the Roman College, where courses in Philosophy and Theology were introduced in 1553. In that same century, Pope Gregory XIII built the new premises, which we can still admire in Piazza del Collegio Romano, not far from here. For this reason, in 1873, Pope Pius IX wanted the Roman College to be named the Pontifical Gregorian University in honour of its patron, Gregory XIII.

We have a rich past and we have a rich present as a university of the twenty-first century. In the University's mission statement, you can read that, as a pontifical university rooted in the Ignatian spirit, we aim to form men and women from every culture in a way that enables them to find God wherever they may work and live. And according to his or her vocation, each one is called to bring the world to God so that God will be known to all peoples in their own languages and traditions.

In that very same spirit, Pope Francis, in his audience with the Gregorian University in April 2014, said:

“You bring along the diversity of your local Churches with your own cultures. This is one of the inestimable riches for the institutions in Rome. It offers us a precious opportunity for growing in the faith as well as for opening the mind and heart to the horizon of catholicity.”

This academic year, the Gregorian University has welcomed around 2,600 students from 120 different countries or nationalities. You are already included in this number!

Today you are starting the diploma course in safeguarding minors. It is one of the most important activities of the Centre for Child Protection, and I warmly welcome you. As you may already know, the vision of the CCP is a world where minors and vulnerable persons are safer – be it within the Catholic Church or society at large. To this end, the CCP is striving to become one of the world's leading centres of excellence in matters of safeguarding.

The CCP defines its mission by promoting prevention measures against sexual abuse and other forms of abuse and by raising awareness and knowledge of the importance of such efforts in order to create a healthy environment.

The diploma course programme particularly aims to form persons who will become:

- Child protection officers in different Church institutions,
- Advisors and trainers in the field of safeguarding in seminaries, formation houses, and schools.

I am sure your stay in our University and in its Centre for Child Protection will prepare you for such important tasks. Many thanks for your presence and for your commitment. You are most welcome here.

Nuno da Silva Gonçalves S.J.