

**Catholic Communications**

Archdiocese of Melbourne. Australia.

25 July, 1996

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E****Parish Education Forum for Oakleigh Parish
A Response to the Aftermath of Sexual Abuse**

A letter of invitation to attend an education, support and resourcing forum has been sent to all members of Sacred Heart Parish, Oakleigh.

The forum will take place at 7.30pm, Monday 29 July at the Sacred Heart Parish Hall.

The letter to parishioners acknowledges that actions by the former Parish Priest, Kevin O'Donnell, have caused and continue to cause suffering and trauma to primary victims and their families. Kevin O'Donnell has pleaded guilty to sexual offences and has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

The forum is part of an ongoing pastoral program at Oakleigh Parish to address the impact of clergy sexual abuse. The meeting has been requested by members of the parish community and is being organised by them and the Parish Co-ordinating Committee, with the assistance of the Parish Priest, Fr Ted Teal and the Pastoral Response Team.

Child sexual abuse educator and therapist, Ms Robyn Miller, will address key areas of concern. Fr Joe MacMahon, representing the Vicar General, and members of the Pastoral Response Team, will outline current church responses and avenues of assistance.

Police and Community counselling services will also be present at the meeting.

In June 1995, the Catholic Church in Melbourne introduced key avenues of response to sexual assault, harassment or misconduct by Church personnel and has developed a pastoral ministry for this purpose. It has initiated a co-ordinated pastoral approach to assist members of the faith community in understanding, healing and responding to misconduct by Church personnel.

For Further Information Contact:

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