

VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

THE HANDLING OF (Reports of) CHILD ABUSE

BY RELIGIOUS AND OTHER NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

**The processes by/through which religious and other non government organisations
respond to**

The criminal abuse of children within their organisations

August 2012

SUBMISSION

Name: Robin Ruth Henderson Forgotten Australian

D.O.B [REDACTED] 1943

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

This is my Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into how religious organisations respond when asked to comment on and or make amends for crimes of abuse committed against children.

As the Parliament will realise, the issues involving the Catholic Church and its various religious institutions alone constitute an enormous problem.

My life has been spent recovering from Catholic Church abuse and, in a depleted state and with no financial assets or prospects and no help or recognition from the Church...excepting that which I forced them to give me by subjecting myself to further abuse and ordeals, I have met society head on and, it seems, I have failed to make a success of my life.

I blame the Catholic Church for making me live a living death.

[REDACTED]

I remain sincerely,

[REDACTED]

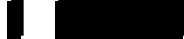
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2012**

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About Me - A Life Expunged



Passport Photo November 1959



Passport photo September 1966



Robin Ruth Henderson 2012

MY STORY

I am a Forgotten Australian

[REDACTED]

I was sexually molested by Fr. Dominic Phillips, Vincentian priest when I was 10 yrs old.

Enquiry Summary

Whilst I commend the launch of this Inquiry and being given the opportunity to lodge a submission and have the chance to be heard by this Parliament, in the State where I was born, to tell everyone of my own experiences after 30 years of silence, I hope that, eventually, the Catholic Church in Australia will be forced to respect the Law of our Land and to obey it, even in the observance of its particular religious culture and customs, for these are our undoing. The much bigger picture I see makes submitting, in accordance with the Terms of Reference of this Inquiry, an extremely difficult undertaking. I am forced to be reconfirmed in the knowledge that the myriad of child sex abuse cases perpetrated by Catholic Church clergy and other Catholics reflect a very minute aspect of a repulsive, inner stickiness in the belly of the Catholic Church. I cannot find another word that allows me to contain my disgust and abhorrence.

I am a former nun. I lived on the inside of the church for fourteen years after having been well educated in Catholic schools by some of the most brilliant women educators around in my day.

[REDACTED]

Childhood Background

The early years

I remember vividly my very early years as a three to five year old with my parents on Nauru Island where my Dad was head engineer in the phosphate mines working for the British Phosphate Commission just after WWII. This was a time when life in Melbourne was cold, harsh and essential foods were still rationed. I remember the coupons for milk, tea, meat if we could afford it. Nauru Island had been bombed during the Pearl Harbour bombing. At some stage a combined British and Australian effort saw the Island cleaned up and made habitable for the workforce of Europeans that would extract the phosphate. Dad had been part of that effort, they called him Number One. There were a few Jeeps and then there was "The Flying Flea" - Dad's black racing car that he had made from a crashed Japanese bomber with a Rolls Royce engine. There was room for the driver and one passenger in the cockpit. Dad and I would drive all around the 12 mile circumference of Nauru on scavenging adventures. Once we found a whale that had been blown out of the water by a land mine. Dad carved me a ring from one of the teeth. My days with Dad were happy days, the only ones I remember!

At home Mum and Dad fought violently. Mum was a very beautiful but a very disturbed lady. Eventually, just before my sixth birthday we returned to Melbourne.

7 Yrs of Age - Boarding School

Mum and Dad were getting divorced, I did not know what that was, for me it meant no more 'home'. They sat me down on their bed one morning and asked me which of the schools I wanted to go to. Dad was what Catholics called "A Proddy". I had a choice of a Catholic school run by nuns or a Protestant school run by strange women. I have no idea why I chose Notre Dame de Sion in Box Hill, but that was my first experience of Institutionalised life and nuns. I was barely seven years of age. It was a dark and sombre place, everything scared me. I lived in perpetual fear and worried about what my parents were doing to each other and if Mum was alright. They'd come to visit once a month, together, initially and then individually. Dad would often hide me at his sister's place and not take me back to school. Mum would turn up at the door with the Police and march me back to school. Finally, when I was 12 they divorced. Dad married [REDACTED] Mum remained alone - being Catholic, she did not believe in divorce... Catholicism ruined my Mother's life and mine.

10 years of Age - Malvern

SEXUAL ABUSE BY FR. DOMINIC PHILLIPS- VINCENTIAN PRIEST

Father Dominic Phillips, according to Broken Rites research, preferred little girls of about 10 years of age. He was shifted around quite a bit from Parish to parish when his dirty deeds were reported. The Vincentian principal even sent him as far away as New Zealand.

I was 10 years of age, a strong, healthy Australian child, despite my traumatic life with my single Mum who found herself floundering after Dad left us.

We lived in "Uncle Bob's house". Uncle Bob was not my real uncle. When Mum was overcome by one of her moods, as I called it, I was ill treated, beaten, emotionally and physically abused and terrorised.

I went to day school at St. Joseph's School in Stanhope Street Malvern for the three or so years after leaving Notre Dame De Sion in Whitehorse Road Box Hill. I was nine years of age when we went to live in Malvern. I was not safe there at day school. Apparently I had a certain air about me at 10 years of age that was somehow attractive to a serial paedophile priest. At St. Joseph's School, I was sexually molested by Fr. Dominic Phillips, a Vincentian priest at the presbytery and in my home, when he knew that Mum was at work.

I told my nun-teacher, she used to send me to the presbytery when Fr. Phillips called for me. She did not believe that the priest did the things I said he had, rather she said he was just being fatherly because he knew I did not have a Dad.

My parents were legally separated by then, and would later be divorced.

I'd had a Dad once, he didn't do the things to me that Fr. Phillips did!

I could not tell Mum, I was afraid, she did not seem to notice anything about me. I was there to make her life easier, do the shopping, the cooking and the cleaning. I was not supposed to have anything wrong with me... ever. Mum was not good in an emergency, she'd hide in a cupboard under a blanket during a thunder storm. She was not the kind of parent a child could rely on for protection. She showed me little affection. She did not remember my Birthdays. She did not buy me presents and seemed disinterested in my needs, nor did she care that my clothes were too small, and my shoes had holes in the soles. She neglected me, but she was all I had and I tried to show her love. She was diligent about my education, adamant that I should go to good Catholic schools and have a good career... apart from that she showed no interest and treated me terribly when she had her 'moods'.

I was resilient, whilst at Malvern, I discovered ice skating, ballet, gymnastics and swimming and I excelled at all of them.

Sports and physical activity seemed to help me to forget the beatings at home and the dirty-feeling things that Fr. Phillips did to me.

) **I reported the Fr. Phillips abuse to THE MELBOURNE RESPONSE in 2009**
My case was heard (refer to response section).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION GUIDE and TERMS OF REFERENCE

"The Committee is seeking submissions relating to how criminal abuse of children is handled in non-government organisations. This includes measures that may exist to prevent abuse.

Religious Organisations

In my submission I address

the handling by Catholic Church "in house" systems for reporting sexual, physical, emotional, psychological and other abuse of children.

I tell of my sexual abuse by a priest when I was ten years old, my reporting of this to The **Melbourne Response**..

I tell how my complaint was handled by this church system,

[REDACTED]

how I have been treated as a Melbourne Response 'client' by Carelink, the counselling services

) 'arm' of this system when in need of health care...which it co-ordinates.

Outlining 'My Story' of abuse as a child and minor teenager at the hands of nuns -

I address *the handling of my complaints* by church "in house" processes in respect of the abuses.

Outlining the sexual abuse suffered at the hands of Father Dominic Phillips

I address *the handling of my complaint* by **The Melbourne Response** and the continued support from **Carelink**- support services.

Other Information on church handling of reports of child sex abuse.

I provide details of Vatican policy on how Bishops are required to handle reports of priests sexually abusing children and other general information from various sources concerning how the church endeavours to minimise its accountability and its culpability, what attitude the church has in respect of itself, its abusive clergy and personnel as opposed to secular law and in respect of its "faithful".

Non -government religious organisations

The Committee is seeking submissions relating to how criminal abuse of children is handled in non-government organisations. This includes measures that may exist to prevent abuse.

My emphasis is on the two 'in house' systems run by the Catholic church in Australia to "handle" complaints of sexual abuse by clergy, religious and other church personnel, my experiences with these two systems, how they operate to protect the church's reputation, image, finances and power rather than in favour of the victim. [REDACTED]

I also touch on knowledge of wider Catholic Church policy of "Cover-Up" relating to incidents and reports of sexual abuse by its clergy and I offer opinion about this and endeavour to offer insights that may bring about legislation to lessen, hopefully stop the abuse of children by the Catholic Church.

10. VICTIM EXPERIENCES

The Committee is seeking information from victims relating to the causes and effects of criminal abuse within religious and other non government organisations.

Reporting the abuse

In respect to my abuse by a priest at school when I was 10

In respect of reporting this abuse to Catholic church “in house” systems as an adult and how I was treated by these systems.

- > Could you tell anyone what happened?
- > Did you feel discouraged from reporting the abuse How long after the abuse did you tell someone?
- > If you delayed in telling or reporting – what prevented you from disclosing earlier?

Response to the disclosure

***What was the initial response from the organisation**

***investigation of the abuse – how was it conducted.**

Result

- > **did the religious organisation accept responsibility**
- > **were you offered an apology, compensation, other forms of assistance**
- > **As a result of your complaint to the religious organisation what actions were taken by them?**
- > **How long did it take to achieve a result?**
- > **Were you satisfied with the process in dealing with the complaint and/or the result?**
- > **What was your view of the effectiveness and adequacy of the compensation?**

What were the effects of the result on you...?

RESPONSES TO REPORTS...RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

11. Investigate the practises policies and protocols in religious and other organisations

- > **nature of the policies and their effectiveness**
- > **implementation of policies and how they are complied with**
- > **any accountability mechanisms surrounding policies**
- > **how supports are provided to victims**
- > **The approach to monetary and other forms of compensation**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE MELBOURNE RESPONSE - Catholic Church “in house” system

This Catholic Church “in house” system was set up by George Cardinal Pell, as Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne in 1996 to handle complaints of sexual and other abuse by priests, religious and lay people who are under the control of the Archbishop of Melbourne. This “in house” system assists people who have been abused sexually, physically and emotionally and is only for abuses that occurred and that occur within the Archdiocese of Melbourne by people who are or who were at the time of the abuse under the control of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

See Attachment – Melbourne Response brochure

”Sexual and Other Abuse – The Melbourne Response”

Carelink Counselling Services – (an 'arm' of The Melbourne Response) ...

This is the counselling and support section that provides counselling and other professional support to victims of abuse in the Archdiocese of Melbourne – refers clients to psychologists, psychiatrists and other health care professionals who have the appropriate background and expertise to address sexual and other abuse and related problems.

The Co-Ordinator is Susan Sharkey

The Independent Commissioner – (“front person” Melbourne Response)

The Commissioner *receives* [REDACTED] then hears and investigates complaints of abuse. He is the 'front person' for making a complaint. If he will not *receive* a complaint then it is not heard and not investigated. You have to get the complaint past him first.

The Independent Commissioner is **senior legal counsel Peter O'Callaghan**

The Compensation Panel – 'arm' of The Melbourne Response

This is chaired by **senior legal counsel David Curtain** together with a panel of professional people. This is the 'arm' that recommends to the Archbishop the amount of compensation to a victim of abuse.

TOWARDS HEALING – Catholic Church “in house” system

This system handles complaints from all other Catholic Diocese in each Australian State and has contacts in each State and in NT. It handles complaints of sexual, emotional and physical abuse by clergy, religious and 'church personnel.

[REDACTED]

The MELBOURNE RESPONSE and TOWARDS HEALING

[REDACTED]

These are the two Catholic church "in house" systems that *receive* complaints of abuse by clergy and church people/employees of the Catholic church.

> The word "receive" is written purposely because, although one would think that the church would want to address this tidal wave of filth and lechery as thoroughly as possible.

Remedy could be:-

Worldwide policy throughout the whole of the Catholic church

- > Full disclosure to civil authorities
- > Absolute isolation and dismissal of any convicted cleric
- > Complete openness and transparency
- > Complete disclosure of all financial situations and property holdings
- > Stop all barriers to the legal process
- > Complete co-operation with civil authorities everywhere

"Crimen Solicitationis is a worldwide Vatican policy of absolute secrecy, an explicit written policy of how to cover up cases of sexual abuse by clergy and how to punish those who would speak up about these crimes. The Vatican's whole attention is focussed on containing and controlling the tsunami case by case. There is extensive written evidence to support this. There is no written policy about helping the victims of this scourge but "Crimen" does state that fear and punishment should be imposed on all victims who openly discuss and disclose what happened to them. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was in the thick of this for years. He has updated Crimen but not to assist victims, nothing has changed except words.

There's no policy to help victims, there's absolutely no policy to help those who are trying to help the victims and an unwritten policy to lie about the existence of the problem.....There's total disregard for the victims, total disregard that you will have a whole new crop of victims in the next place ..(the priest is moved to)....The Vatican has no child protection policy....Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope, could get up tomorrow and say- now here's the policy for throughout the church . Full disclosure to the civil authorities. Absolute isolation and dismissal of any convicted cleric. Complete openness and transparency. Complete disclosure of all financial situations. Stop all barriers to the legal process. Completely co-operate with the civil authorities everywhere..He could do that."

(Tom Doyle – Canon Lawyer, from a media interview BBC News 2006)

The "independent Commissioner" - Mr. Peter O'Callaghan – Melbourne Response.

Mr, O'Callaghan is a QC.

A copy of a leaflet outlining the terms of his appointment is attached.. Mr. O' Callaghan is the first person a victim of abuse approaches. His job is to "receive" complaints [REDACTED]

An Example –

My Complaint against Fr. Dominic Phillips -Vincentian and parish assistant priest

I bring to the Inquiry's attention the issue of sexual abuse that I brought before the Melbourne Response in 2008 concerning a Vincentian priest, Fr. Dominic Phillips, now deceased, who abused me when I was a child of ten at St. Joseph's school in Malvern, Victoria, during his time working in that parish.

I am single, never married and for the last 28 years I have lived in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] After appealing to Peter O'Callaghan and with back and forth correspondence and telephone calls over a period of about one month, I eventually succeeded in having the Melbourne Response pay for legal advice on the Deed of Release document. I then received 'compensation' and a letter from Archbishop Denis Hart that was nothing short of heartless, wishing me happiness in my future life.

See a Psychiatrist

Part of the process of my bringing this serial paedophile priest- abuser of little pre pubescent girls, Fr. Dominic Phillips of the Vincent Fathers to account, from his grave, for what he did to me and for the consequences it brought to my whole life even to this day, was that I was required to see a psychiatrist, chosen by The Melbourne Response, for three sessions for evaluation.

[REDACTED]

The Melbourne Response is making a big thing of their ex gratia settlements saying they are doing all the right things, even going so far as to claim that they base their 'system' on that of Work Cover...when there is no right of appeal and no one single guideline for every victim, [REDACTED] there is no fixed rule, no fixed table to calculate ex gratia payments and no victim is able to even estimate what they are entitled to as a payout. I am owed a lifetime of lost income, career, a family, of medical bills either paid by my compassionate friends and mainly by the taxpayer and his/her family. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The church stole my life from me not once but twice. Fr. Dominic Phillips taught me that priests are not safe. My mentally tormented mother, believed in him and reinforced my vulnerability thus diminishing my escape options.

I thought that Fr. Phillips knew what was right more than my mother did. Mum also taught me to obey the nuns, always, so when a nun came to me aged 15 and told me I had a vocation I believed her. [REDACTED]

Life crushed in the Church mangle

My life continues to be crushed in the mangle of the church. By day as the memories pop up at random. By night in horrors.

My mind is dark and unhappy, my body is contorted by pain, my once bright happy, talented disposition is destroyed. My dreams are nightmares and my whole being is contorted, yet, The Melbourne Response believes it has done the right thing by me!

It's not about the "band-aid" money that will never compensate for what I could have earned and saved for my future had I ever been able to work. As a young woman aged thirty and beyond having escaped the convent from my hospital bed, I've pain and mental anguish. I have seen many psychiatrists, taken many psychotropic drugs, been hospitalised and pumped full of hallucinogens and hypnotics, lithium, modecate and eventually many other drugs to counteract all the conflicting side effects. I became extremely ill. I recognised that if I did not refuse these drugs I would die so I unaddicted myself over a period of 18 months and vowed never to take another prescribed drug ever again. I fled the city for the [REDACTED] country and the clean air and food to restore my body and mind, Today some of the conditions brought about by the drugs are chronic.

[REDACTED]

The Melbourne Response offers, as part of a victim's compensation and rehabilitation, to pay for them to see a psychiatrist, preferably. Alternatively, you see a psychologist, see either for as long as you need. The Melbourne Response pays for all sessions and for all and any of the [REDACTED] drugs that psychiatry prescribes....for as long as the victim needs.. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I've battled my whole life long to appear to be 'normal' whatever that is. I've never had a paying job or been able to study towards a good career. Ever since I escaped from my last church prison I've received a government pension courtesy of the hard working Australian tax payer...and that does nothing for my self esteem because I am not of mean intelligence.

I have worked employing my artistic talents in every way I could devise. As a result, I have a 1998 second hand vehicle and mortgaged roof over my head that every year I fear I will lose due to my ever increasing inability to supplement my meagre government income. [REDACTED]

Standover tactics, patronisation, passive bullying...to keep you in your place

A member of the Compensation Panel asked if I was OK with my debts but that led to nothing.

██████████ was in so much mental anguish and physical pain from my recent hip surgery that I was ** too scared to explain* that I feared I'd lose my house because I needed to pay out my mortgage.

I felt guilty that I'd mismanaged. I did not want to admit my ignorance...deep down I think I secretly feared they would rebuke me or punish me..(which was unrealistic but that was how I felt)...afraid of this group of people sitting there scrutinising me, judging me, having read my private medical information - psychiatrist's report, thinking the worst...maybe they'd recommend more treatment to make me responsible.....I was afraid to ask.

I would have liked them to pay out my mortgage and my utilities and so relieve me of a great burden but I did not feel I deserved the help. Having been in a convent since the age of 16 for fourteen years and coming out in total ignorance of financial matters was an enormous, embarrassing disadvantage. Nobody even suspected my situation.

-) This was a meeting to supposedly help me and instead I was patronised, talked-down to...bashed like a piece of steak until I was 'tender' and would offer no resistance and then intimidated by stand-over tactics.

Manage my life in civilian society?

It was an unrealistic expectation to have thought that I would have been able to manage my life better after going through the Melbourne Response system!

There I had hoped and expected to find compassion, but nothing changed except that I could afford to have my 1924 weatherboard house repaired so it would not be condemned, and to buy myself some of the things that the average wage-earner takes for granted...any kind of food I wanted, rather than a diet of steamed rice and vegetables and absolutely no extras, maybe some clothes that were new rather than re-vamped op shop fashions. For the first time in my life, a winter coat, of my own design that I had really longed to have, a pair of leather boots and a laptop...but none of that went to mending my psyche that was simmering and reeling and writhing and bubbling so deep inside that not even I felt the tremors until something happened to make it all bubble to the surface.

The Melbourne Response, despite the exterior care, money and attention to get me ██████████ ██████████ to my session before the infamous (Inquisitive) Compensation Panel in the "show of might, power and money" Vatican-like massive columned, marble-halled edifice of the church solicitor's building, was a further form of abuse of a kind that not even a veteran of church abuse could immediately recognise.

Who would not, who had never been exposed to the edifices of multimillion dollar commerce, be completely stunned, dumbfounded and overcome at being ushered into such luxurious surrounds, offered coffee and sandwiches and be fussed over?

I was numbed and perplexed and intimidated by all this. At the actual meeting table, they talked and I listened, and if I spoke up when invited I choked, was talked over, and things were explained and re-explained ad infinitum as if I were of diminished intellect.

I came away from there devastated but had decided to make the very best of having some extra money to fix up my house and to stretch whatever would be the amount as far as it would go.

What I did not consider, ██████████ ██████████ was that money would not heal me, and it was healing I needed, healing that would enable me to stand upright and defend my life and profit from my endeavours to secure my latter years...finally.

But I did not get that from The Melbourne Response. ██████████ ██████████

As a general rule, as a victim of abuse, an ex nun and one who has never been able to join the honest workforce to provide for myself, I have very few expectations of life and do not know what more I should expect or what it is that I am owed. One could argue that I should have a pretty good idea after living in secular society for all these years.. true, maybe I should, but my conditioning still dictates what I should and should not have.

Firmly ingrained in my psyche is that I do not merit and so should not expect much at all. Others who have had the opportunities that I have missed and who know how the world works, tell me that the church owes me big time. Yet, try as I may, I am not very able to conceive of that. The church knows this about victims and takes full advantage to give as little as possible and to tie up in legalities whatever it does give so that when we do finally realise what are our entitlements, we can never approach the church again.

I was not expecting what was to happen to me next, two years later. I'd argued, and succeeded in getting funding for my medications of \$5.50 a month, [REDACTED]. I'd argued, again with success, that part of my accessing the prescriber of my authority script medication was the cost of petrol for a 130k round trip, my lunch and a kennel for the day for my Assistance-Trained dog. My dog was the only living being I trusted. He was my best friend, my 56kg helper around the place, my confidante, my therapist, my 'other'. The big warm body on my bed at night, the fierce protector who growl and scare away anything he perceived would harm me. I had a duty of care towards him so he would not suffer in a hot parked car whilst I spent hours sitting in the outpatients section of a public hospital..... and it is about him that I have to write next.

I felt safe everywhere and at all times with my faithful, loyal, trusty dog at my side...until I went away for a week to a conference to learn how better to cope with being a survivor of clergy abuse. I came home to find my beautiful companion dying at the vet of a rapid onset autoimmune disorder and he could not be saved. I buried him in an adult sized hole in the garden outside my bedroom and my life fell apart. I had not realised the extent of how completely safe he kept me, how deep and all encompassing was his protective presence. Then I had an accident injuring both my legs and immobilising me for many months.... almost two years to today (August 2012). Since 16th November 2010, I've been living in a 24 hr nightmare of night sweats, uncontrollable wailing of a kind that, given the injuries to my larynx from throat surgery, I would have never thought possible. Everything I thought had been dealt by my encounter with The Melbourne Response is back again as if none of my issues had ever been addressed... because they never were! Money does did not make it go away. Counselling helps, medication quells the aching, physical parts, but the demons in the dungeon never die.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to leave me wake up screaming after a few horrific hours of disturbed sleep on wet sheets, in sweated out nightclothes, to get up at least twice in the night and first thing in the morning to change everything, wash at least two sets of bedding and nightclothes whilst trying to make myself breakfast as my Dystonia kicks in, and I shake uncontrollably, until I manage to get something in my stomach so I can take my meds. They do not see or hear me wailing and sobbing uncontrollably at intervals during each day, disconsolately calling my safe friend to my side, and when he does not come, realising he is gone....this is supposed to be CARE!

The Melbourne Response has failed in their duty of care, failed to provide Restorative Justice to me, failed to offer appropriate assistance, redress and compensation and I have learnt, yet again, that in reality they do not care, do not want to minister to me, and worse... that they never ever really did!

They know well that money will not silence the demons in my dungeon, those kinds of phantasms do not respond to money. It might keep them at bay for a while whilst their host goes busily about things they've dreamt of doing for years..but not forever.

It only takes another incredible upheaval to topple the fragile life for them to re surface...ten times worse than before.

[REDACTED]

At the time I saw the Melbourne Response psychiatrist I was quite unwell, still recovering from major orthopaedic surgery, still in pain, having mobility difficulties and it was all quite an ordeal for me. I was obliged to exert extra effort so not to be tricked into something that would cause me detriment. Victims should be able to trust those who say they are there to help. As usual, there's nothing trustworthy in the church when it comes to their handling of its victims of abuse.

[REDACTED] led me to believe that I was going to receive all the help I needed...all I had to do was to follow the process, make the effort to subject myself to three sessions in psychiatrists rooms at [REDACTED]. The journey there and back was 300km. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Now it seems that their only intent was to put me through their fake process, give me some money, make me sign a legal documents releasing them from any further requests for help and try to make me believe that I could never ask them for anything ever again irrespectively of whether I was able to cope.

The Melbourne Response is a "Smoke Screen Process" that re abuses and the re-traumatizes victims of church sexual abuse.

Going through The Melbourne Response has only compounded my condition.

[REDACTED]

The whole idea was to give the appearance of a 'hearing', "a friendly, informal meeting where we can get to know you, where you can tell us what are your needs...nothing to fear....etc..."

The Compensation Panel meetings do not have a pre determined format, there is no recording of sessions and no minutes. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I was not asked if there was anything I needed or wanted, and if I was allowed to speak I was interrupted. Susan Sharkey told me that they were there to help me recover in any way they could.

[REDACTED]

People who hear just some of my story say I am owed millions more than my compensation for the "Malvern Matter".* The Melbourne Response acted as though that was what I received and treated me as though I should be grateful for their crumbs. What price a little girl's integrity? What price making her accept that this was, as my nun teacher said, "fatherly" love? My Dad did not do that to me.. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Maybe if I agreed to continue seeing that psychiatrist and take the medications my mind would be clear....or I would cease to care and I would not hurt any more. I wished I'd never approached The Melbourne Response!

*"The Malvern Matter" was what my abuse case involving Fr. Dominic Phillips was called. I thought it was because they were embarrassed! [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Fr. Phillips' name was not on the Deed which read vaguely that it was acknowledged I'd been sexually abused. I still feel there's a hidden agenda in here somewhere, 'though I have not a clue what it could be...every other victim's Deed bears the name of their abuser. I felt as if it was being implied that I'd not been abused.

[REDACTED]

Going through The Melbourne Response system is as if we are all put on a conveyor belt of [REDACTED]...there are no rules, there seems to be no schedule of severity against which each abuse is measured. Anglicare has a schedule. It feels like "oh just throw X at that one and Y at that one and tell them to have a happy life." When one becomes aware that we are...an inconvenience it becomes very demeaning. In my case "The Malvern Matter", my abuser was deceased so not too many consequences for the church, most importantly, no obligation to report the priest to the Police, just be paid off the victim to sign a meaningless Deed of Release...and the Melbourne Response appears to be cleaning up the clergy abusers.

Approaching the Melbourne Response with my complaint against Fr. Dominic Phillips...sexual molestation and abuse of me a 10yrs

I approached The Melbourne Response.

I was "put through the process".

The process entails:-

1. Submitting written graphic details of the abuse to Peter O'Callaghan QC, (no option to be interviewed by a woman if the victim is a woman.)
2. Being taken over the complaint word for word with Peter O'Callaghan, being asked questions and being asked if I was sure of the details, did I want to add or subtract.
3. Peter O'Callaghan, [REDACTED], refers victim to Carelink Counselling Services- Susan Sharkey who send the victim to be assessed by a psychiatrist of Carelink's choice over two sessions.
4. Psychiatric Report is then read to victim by Susan Sharkey...she tries to get you alone for this – no support person...and she explains what it all means! [REDACTED]
5. Victim is brought before...The Compensation Panel consisting of David Curtin QC and several people of different professions...victim is not informed about their qualifications.. [REDACTED]...all having read and discussed all the psychiatric and other reports. VERY INTIMIDATING and EMBARRASSING [REDACTED]

The Compensation Panel- my experience

Note This whole church "Tribunal" process was held at the very sumptuous chambers of the church solicitors in Brisbane...stainless steel columns reminiscent of the Vatican pillars, marble flooring, indoor fountains... [REDACTED]

They informed me that there would be no stenographer, no notes were to be taken, no recordings made, no minutes were provided (and I requested these).

> I was allowed to have "a support person".

> [REDACTED]

> The offer of monetary compensation was meagre but I was too exhausted to refuse it and bargain for more.

> With the Deed was an accompanying letter [REDACTED] The letter was from Richard Leder Church solicitor stating that if I signed the Deed I would not have the right to return to The Melbourne Response for anything else connected with this complaint ever again.....or to present any other complaint apart from this!

> I wrote to Barney Zwartz at The Age in protest. I saw this as the church's way of silencing victims by pre-empting complaints...I described it as "one ONLY dip in the pie" - [REDACTED]. ONE complaint per victim. I saw it as an attempt to prevent victims of multiple abusers from making complaints about all of them. This, in my view, would save the church compensation money and give an opportunity to state that the occurrences of abuse had reduced significantly.

([REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

> The church Solicitor, Richard Leder wrote to me excusing "the mistake" he'd made with the wording..stating that "Of course I could lodge other complaints and ask for help associated with this abuse.

> The covering letter which was intended to convey to victims that

a) it was part of the Deed of Release

b) that as such it was legal and binding

> c) that it prevented victims from making any further claims associated with the abuse covered by the Deed...was worded: "...you will need to sign the *enclosed* document (Deed of Release) which releases the Archbishop from all further claims arising out of the sexual abuse or any other abuse by a priest, religious or lay person under the control of the Archbishop of Melbourne."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I wrote to Mr. O'Callaghan QC, the Independent Commissioner, to whom one reports abuse by persons under the control of the Archbishop.

I reported the Melbourne Response for abuse!

I insisted that they pay for Angela Sdrinis to view my Deed, they did.

I was amazed...and I became suspicious of the workings of The Melbourne Response as there is no transparency. Victims should retain a degree of caution in dealing with The Melbourne Response...this system needs investigating.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Their Response- I had no idea!

The Mother General of the time, when I questioned her years later, *said she did not know* the truth of how I got to Italy!

This is a typical response used even today when religious are asked to answer for their wrong-doing –“ ...we did not know, we did not realise etc...”

I was among the [REDACTED] for close on 14 years. In Italy for close on 7 years and in Australia for the remainder, until I became very ill and walked away. For all that time I had no way of reaching out to anyone. I was in prison! I'd been a kid out in the workforce lying about my age for the extra money and trying to finish my education so I could have a good life. Mum was struggling with her health and financially... she had trusted the nuns to do what she asked. They did not. They thought they knew better. They thought that they could do whatever they wanted as God's representatives...

[REDACTED]

The nuns [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The [REDACTED] response- obfuscations, denials and lies

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This Parliamentary Inquiry

This Inquiry asks for information about *how* various religious organisations *respond to and deal with those who disclose and report* acts of criminal abuse that occur in and are perpetrated by people belonging to those religious organisations.

My submission is about the religious organisation known as

The Roman Catholic Church- I was sexually abuse by a priest when I was 10 yrs of age.

[REDACTED]

The Melbourne Response - to handle complaints of abuse by clergy and church people in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Towards Healing- also to handle complaints of abuse by clergy and other church people.

A recent set back

I suffer severe arthritis and take heavy pain medication to stay on my feet. In 2010 I injured both my knees and a hip prosthesis and lost my mobility. In the same time frame my Assistance Dog (a giant breed) became suddenly ill and had to be put down. I organised an excavator to dig his grave on my land, I live alone. This trauma triggered emotional trauma from my abuse and I was desperately struggling not to lose control. I was thrown into deep grief and depression.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Melbourne Response, on paper, seems to offer a more gentle and healing approach to the alternative of a court case.

It has been my experience that it is abusive, that it seeks to control victims, demoralise victims, make them beg for help, that it metres out the help like crumbs and would have us grovel.

The Melbourne Response in general

One assumes that Mr. O'Callaghan's first investigative act would be to pass any accusations of sexual abuse and serious other abuse on to the Police, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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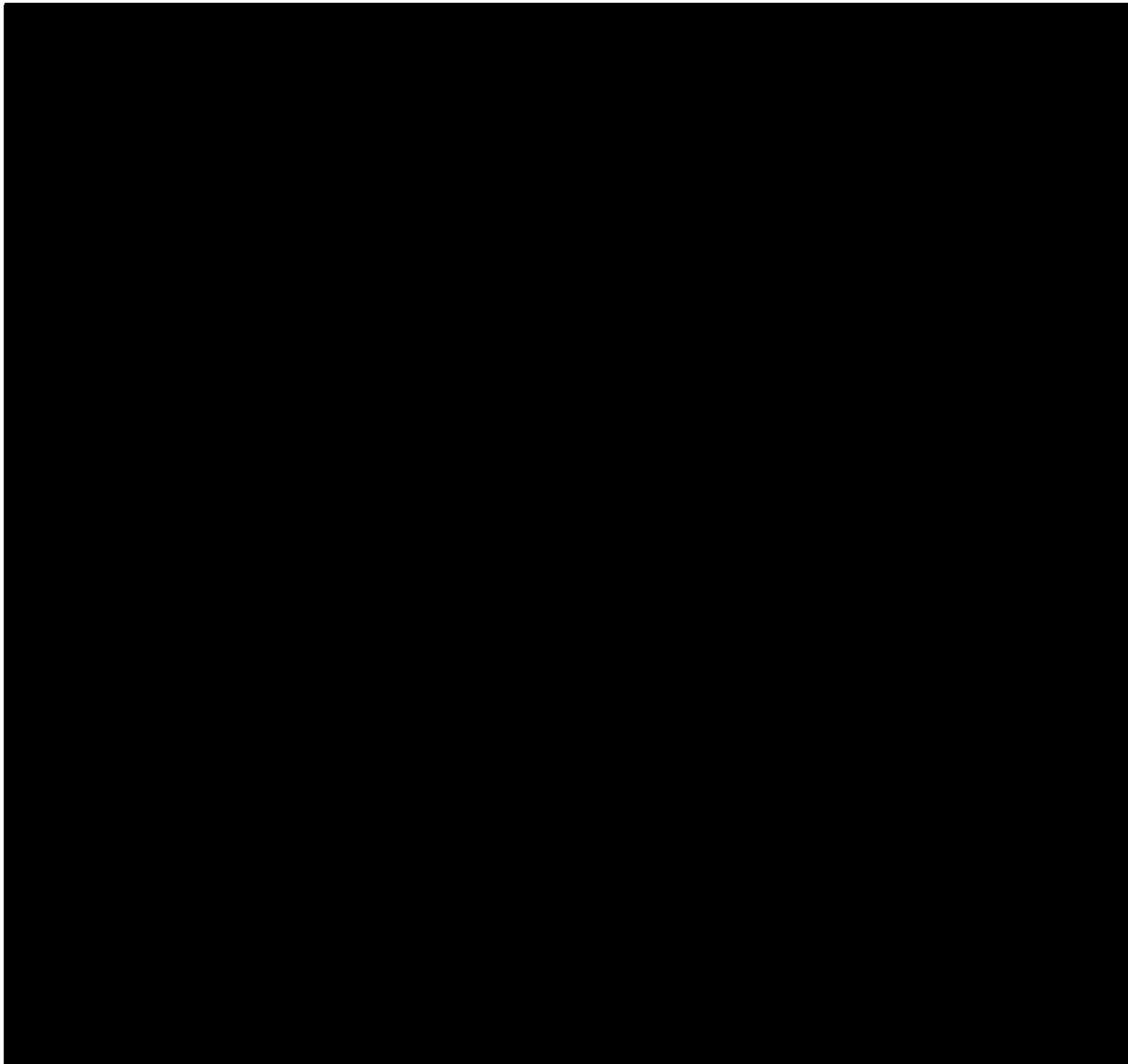
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



I was a strong, healthy, fun-loving teenager, a Junior Champion Ice Skater, I loved ballet,

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

PP: P 2
[Redacted text block]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **from the hostel and abuses**

In placing me as a boarder at The Pastorelle Sisters' hostel, my mother did not relinquish custody of me to them. It was not intended that I was entering their convent.

These nuns saw a vulnerable, young single woman without a partner (no witnesses) with a young teenage child who had no home and they preyed on us.

Stolen girls as nuns

It was their custom in Italy to seek out poor families with daughters, offer to educate the daughter and, when the girl was attending the organisation's "in house" school she would be gradually talked into becoming a nun. They would prey on girls as young as 12 years.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Catholic Church Policies & my recommendations

Church Policy

The most important thing to understand about Catholic church "Response Systems" and about any kind of response by members of the Catholic church organisation to disclosures of abuse is that there is no such thing as an honest response or a genuine "response protocol".

The Catholic church- a political Monarchy

The Catholic church, more than just a religious organisation, is one of only two surviving political monarchies in the world. [REDACTED]

-) Remembering that the Catholic church is a monarchical (authoritarian) governmental system and not an equal opportunity democracy, and that the Catholic church is an acknowledged political power, one needs to comprehend that...
the Governmental Policy of the Catholic church stands above all its other systems.

The Catholic Church is still run by the Holy Inquisition

Sever political ties with the Vatican – a greedy, evil, criminal political power

It is my opinion that Australia needs to expel the Vatican Ambassador - The Apostolic Nuncio and sever political ties with the Vatican...This need to happen if ever the criminal abuses being committed by Catholic Church in Australia are to be curtailed, if Australian children and other vulnerable people are to be assured that they are free and protected. The greater portion of these church crimes in our country remain un-dealt-with. The church has money and power, not only temporal power over people's minds, a power that uses fear for compliance. The only solution to Catholic Church criminal abuse of children is to sever political ties with this Monarchy!

The uncovering of the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic church has forced the church to put in place the *appearances* of taking responsibility for these crimes of its clergy and religious and of doing something to make restitution to the victims. Relying on the spiritual sway and control it holds over its people, and on the precept of forgiveness and compassion, the church has instituted "in house" resolution systems – protocols to which a victim of abuse in the church can appeal for resolution of the matter...like the church's own private 'court' so to speak. These resolution systems are in themselves abusive!

Despite these 'response institutions' by the church it is important to bear in mind that Church Policy cannot be overridden by these "resolution/response systems" with their own structures and "officials" that work these systems. Church Policy stands above all else. These systems run in contradiction to Policy so, although there is the appearance of genuine resolution protocols, these are a Sham, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Do we want to wait and see what the Catholic Church has in mind for Australia?

Misleading "Response Protocols" - more damage, no healing, no justice

Their true purpose is to mislead people into believing that the Catholic church is genuinely and compassionately trying to do something about the abuse. The opposite is true. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There is nothing genuinely compassionate or victim-friendly about them.

Victims all give negative feed-back of their experiences in going through these church protocols. Victims are re-victimised and re-abused, and it is serious because of their vulnerability. These "response protocols" cause more damage than healing

Inquiry into the processes by which religious and other non government organisations respond to the criminal abuse of children within their organisations.

Hierarchy – The Catholic church is a **Monarchical Governmental structure**. It has a court and a class system. The monarch is The supreme Pontiff – The Pope. The nobles of this monarch's court are the Cardinals-Princes of the Church who have risen up through the ranks. Next are the Arch Bishops, then Bishops then priests...and there's an order of rank among priests. It is a highly ordered structure.

The term "Catholic" means *universal* and the meaning of that is that the Catholic (universal) church/ monarchy is destined to govern the whole world and all peoples. They say this is on a spiritual level... but..... enslave the minds of a people, fill them with fear, tell them to leave their brains at the door, the Church will think for them, just follow the shepherd like the sheep...that leads to domination and to subjugation...**a bloodless coup**, unlike the days when the monarch/Pope, sword in hand, led his Bishops and priests to slaughter the infidel.

The Catholic church. The Kingdom of God on Earth

The concept is that the Catholic church, established by God Himself is the One True Church, the whole world should obey it and bow down to its monarch /God on Earth The Pope....

These teachings were inculcated in all Catholic children from the outset.

The greatest emphasis is placed on **Obedience** to the Church.

To disobey, to criticise, to dissent, to speak ill, to offend the Church and its hierarchy means to bring disgrace on the Church and **...to displease God**, God who punishes disobedience with 'death'- It is a "Mortal (deathly) Sin"(offence) punishable by damnation to Hell to burn in the fire forever to criticise the church.

The Catholic church is used to controlling people by fear and show of power.

People are questioning the myths and the Catholic church needs to find other ways to keep its hold on power and control of people. The Church is expert at covering up the crimes of its clergy, hiding the abusers from the Law...and it employs on retainers the best lawyers that money can buy.

Why would need to do this if they had nothing to hide or to defend.

Resolution Protocols for clergy abuse victims

The Catholic church has two "in house" systems in place to handle reports of sexual abuse of children and other abuse by its clergy, religious and personnel. These are:-

1. **Towards Healing (NPS) National Professional Standards**
2. **The Melbourne Response**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There is use of the word “complainant” - which is legal terminology and also implies that the victim is not a victim until there's proof of abuse..which is rather intimidating – the victim is not believed!

The Catholic church respects only itself, protecting its hierarchy against the justice of our legal system by hiding the accused and by demeaning their victims, not even giving them credence,

[REDACTED]

A less traumatising way...towards justice and...*finding closure gently?!*

The Catholic Church uses its resolution processes to save the church money and the embarrassment of court proceedings...whilst presenting this process to victims as....

a less traumatising way to find justice...and a gentler way for finding “closure”.

There is never closure in a church process! After the process they try to get you “Back into the fold”...the last thing victims need and want!

[REDACTED]

How does the Catholic Church respond to reports of abuse?

The Catholic church in respect of its clergy abusers - lies, cheats, covers-up and hides behind its facades of good works...and charity, making use of its friends in high places to excuse its crimes and to exculpate itself from a 'sin' that would bear the heaviest of penances had it been committed by anyone else. In respect of “complainants” those who have been abused -these are intimidated, passively derided, and the utmost is done to make them appear unreasonable and petty and even dishonest.

How to stop the Catholic church's flood of sexual abuse of Australia's children?

Hand over the files

Thomas Doyle, a modern day champion of the clergy abuse victim is of the opinion that the only way to bring the Catholic church to account and, as he puts it, "do the right thing" would be to legally oblige each Bishop of a diocese where there are priests accused of sexual abuse who have escaped prosecution..to hand over all FILES on every priest, brother and religious who has been accused of sexual abuse.

ROYAL COMMISSION

These have to be the scariest words that the Catholic Church could ever hear in this climate where Bishops and Cardinals are running for cover over this Inquiry! COMPEL THE CATHOLIC CHURCH BY LAW ! OBLIGE IT TO OBEY THE LAW OF THE LAND.

FILES ON EVERY PRIEST , RELIGIOUS AND CHURCH PERSON ACCUSED!

Expel the Ambassador The Catholic church is a political entity with an Ambassador in Australia – the Apostolic Nuncio, it might be an idea to follow what Ireland did and cut political ties with the Vatican, sent the Nuncio/Ambassador home!

Outlaw the resolution processes- These are mentally abusive! They violate people's privacy!

These Catholic Church 'resolution systems/protocols' act autocratically with private information. They violate human rights!

Fine the Catholic church \$X for every victim of every convicted priest offender. Give compensations to victims from the pockets of the Bishop enablers who hid the priest sex abusers and moved them around....giving sufficient funds to the victims to allow them lives of luxury and ease for the rest of their days comparable to the cushy retirements lived by the enablers.

Destroy a nation by destroying the futures of its children?

I am not a conspiracy theorist but I cannot help but wonder -

> Is the sexual abuse of our children by those who uphold themselves as almighty and powerful authorities of great importance and representatives of God, an attempt to subdue, to demoralise and to incapacitate our future citizens as...what seems to be part of a push to gain political hold of our country through what seems to be a benign, awe-inspiring religion?

Impoverish the church?

Will the sexual abuse of children by the Catholic clergy stop if the Catholic church is impoverished, if it is forced to follow in the footsteps of its founder...(who wore home made sandals, no silk socks and certainly no gold encrusted velvet slippers). The Catholic church would return to its medieval show of power with its robes and palaces and ceremonies. Is this because demoralised people are drawn to pomp ceremony and ritual .

Has the Catholic church added the *demoralisation of Nations* through sexual abuse of the children to its arsenal of conquest?

Will the abuse and the *illusion of having the right to abuse* stop if the Catholic church no longer holds financial, psychological and political sway over people...if it becomes a beggar like many of the abused have become, having had their self respect and innocence stolen by holy men? Unable to ever grasp what happened to them they cannot overcome the confusion, so they live lives voided of hope and incentive.

How to make the Catholic church lose its incentive and all hope! How to rid our society of this abusive foreign government in our midst?

"Abandon all hope ye who enter herein!" This is the inscription over the portal to Hell(Inferno) – written by the 14th century poet Dante Aleghieri. The church of today would have a lot of company down there in the fellowship of all the sodomite clerics headed by "His Lordship" Andrea de Mozzi Bishop of Florence and in the company of Padre Stefano Cherubini, from an esteemed Vatican family, who has the pain and torment of a long line of little boys on his conscience.

Catholic 'response' protocols V Church Policy - "Crimen Solicitationis"- ("Crimen")

The protocols outlining the help and assistance the church offers to victims of its sex abuser clergy are worth nothing!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Australian sex abuse victims of the foreign power, the Catholic Church operating in Australia
Victims have been bound under Australian law to non disclosure the content of some Deeds of release that they are required to sign on receipt of settlement of their case through the church 'resolution systems'. This is, in itself, re- abuse of victims.

The Australian Law is used against Australian citizens to protect the image of the Catholic church, a foreign power operating in Australia, and I find this extremely objectionable.

[REDACTED]

Pleading for help

I have found that to get any form of assistance and compensation or satisfaction from the Catholic church in times when my trauma resurfaces that I have had to **beg** for help. The Catholic church offers all support to its abusive sex offenders, these are regarded as the real victims- clergy are holy, people are sinners. Whilst this warped concept reigns there is little hope for those who have suffered clergy sex abuse.

[REDACTED]

The agenda of “Crimen” - “The blueprint of deception”

“Cover it up as far as possible! Error, Vice, Depravity, Immorality and Vile, Vicious behaviour are found only among the flock, never among the shepherds!” (Pope John Paul II- “Beyond Belief- The Catholic Church and The Child Abuse Scandal” by David Yallop 2010)

Shifting the Goal Post- keeping up appearances- no complaining

[REDACTED]

there's not even a complaints division – a properly set-up system for lodging a complaint if one is not satisfied with the treatment received or with the result of any compensation offer. The Catholic church is not an 'equal opportunity set-up, not a democracy. Attempts to quote the protocol and to argue the point when one is the victim of unfair, inequitable treatment go unheeded because these protocols have no standing except to create *the appearance that the church is sincere in its resolve* to support the victims of its clergy sex abusers.

Minimum care for after-care and maximum compliance expected.

These “in house” protocols are “not the real deal” so victims/clients have learnt not to expect much assistance after they have “settled” their case.

The Catholic church is not keen to put substantial amounts of money into the “after-care” of clients...(unless this effects the client's silence or subjugates them in some way...makes them compliant and...'manageable').

Church Psychiatrists

At some point in the hearing of a complaint by The Melbourne Response, a victim of abuse is required to be seen by a psychiatrist. Carelink -i.e. Susan Sharkey a psychologist and the Carelink Co-Ordinator, organises this.

Confidentiality...whenever convenient

Victims/clients are given reassurances that the strictest of confidentiality is observed with regard to these sensitive documents. If ever there is a need to make further use of the Reports to assist a particular victim, release forms are required to be signed...BUT..victims have discovered that there is "in house" sharing of confidential information by the various "arms" of The Melbourne Response (no information release documents requested).

CONCERN -if ever a victim takes The Melbourne Response to court ...or in the case where there's a court hearing about another occasion of abuse...I have good reason to believe that a victim's psychiatric report from any former occasion would be used against him/her by The Melbourne Response!

[REDACTED]

The Catholic church and Psychiatry- subdue complainants

The Melbourne Response protocol requires for each appellant, a psychiatric assessment.

The psychiatric Report is commissioned by the Church!

The psychiatric report is considered property of the Church....and the Church will do with the information in it whatever it deems necessary!

No psychiatric assessment – no access to the resolution protocol If the victim refuses to be assessed by a psychiatrist then he/she has no access to the protocol!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Currently I need rehabilitative treatments and therapies to restore my mobility after a serious accident, an accident that triggered my abuse trauma.

I am afraid and I feel demeaned having to put my doctor in contact with Carelink and with the therapy provider. My private information becomes property of the Church if I do this because the Church would be paying for my treatment and would insist on being kept informed of my progress...as if it owned me!

[REDACTED]

Psychiatrists, Compensation for clergy sexual abuse and client privacy.

Seeing a Church-approved psychiatrist is an integral part of lodging a complaint of sexual abuse and reaching the Compensation Panel of The Melbourne Response. Its a very traumatic. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sexual and Other Abuse-The Melbourne Response – something rather than risking getting nothing in court.

The Information brochure on the workings of The Melbourne Response seems to portray the process as very open and transparent. It describes at length the church's before and after services for victims who have approached the system and have been compensated. It describes the amount of maximum compensation as if all victims can hope to receive this and it advises : "If the recommended payment is not accepted a person making a complaint is free to use the normal court processes....." and **risk getting nothing** and not having access to all the free support and services offered by the Melbourne Response...it is an attractive proposition to the alternative of a court process. "Going through" this process, receiving a small amount of compensation and having access to the after services draws victims into a cycle of re-abuse.

The Code of Secrecy- CRIMEN

The Vatican obliges church authorities, Bishops, with regard to church people accused of crimes of abuse, to conform to a Policy under The Secret System of "Crimen Solicitationis" to "remove and promote".

[REDACTED]

Catholics are indoctrinated since early childhood that priests take the place of Christ, are to be obeyed *whatever the cost* (maybe the meaning is that if the priest requires sexual favours he is to be obeyed)..priests are not to be questioned or criticised and there's a concept of 'zero tolerance' towards church critics. The Vatican employs hand picked advisors who oversee and recommend that 'problems' are kept within the church.

[REDACTED]

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present my submission and that this enquiry results in positive outcomes & justice for all victims involved.

I would be willing to give verbal evidence to the committee.

[REDACTED]