

Family and Community Development Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

31 August 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

I was subjected to repeated sexual abuse and assault inflicted on me and my class mates at St Joseph's Boys Primary Stanhope Street Malvern on or about 1962 to 1965 which was reported to senior Christian brothers and they ignored the reports ensuring untold damage to over 100 boys.

The Perpetrator was a man called Brother Anselm his real name was Tom Hallam.

The principle of the school was a Brother [REDACTED]

In 1965, I was a nine year old Grade Four child at the school run by De La Salle Brothers.

Brother Anselm was a huge man, very intimidating in stature and demeanour. The boys in his care were in constant fear of indiscriminate brutal beatings for no reason.

Hallam would regularly instruct different children in his class to sit on his lap as he conducted classes. This was in the cover behind a large desk. For long periods of time - twenty to thirty minutes at least he would molest the chosen boy (myself on occasions) by placing his hand down your pants and fondle your penis and testicles.

Also on an occasion where a child requested to go to the toilet he would put his hand down their pants fondling you saying he was `checking if it was wet` This was in full view of the class.

If you were to become reluctant or object to this you soon found yourself being subjected to punishment by strapping for the most minor `misbehaviour`.

The strap was about two inches wide, half an inch thick and about two foot in length. This was delivered on your hands with a full swing. Hallam would reach behind his back and hit you with all the force he could muster.

All the children were in a state of ongoing and intimidation and fear of this man.

On sports day he would select a number of children to `change their uniform` to their sports gear. He would instruct these children to stay back at lunch, place them up standing on the desk and then strip them naked, fondle their testicles and penis. He would then slowly dress them in their sports uniform.

In 1966, Grade Five we had a lay teacher, she was a young lady. It was such a relief to have a normal person as a teacher.

One day that year I was in Grade Five was a sports day. As it became common a number of boys including myself, would climb up onto the ledge below the side windows of the Grade Four class to peek at what Brother Ansalum was doing to the new Grade Four class boys. I recall the watchful eyes the previous year when I was the one being undressed and assaulted.

On the 1966 occasion we witnessed the undressing routine - Brother Anselm noticed us watching and we quickly scampered away.

As I was running away with my classmates I reached the corner of the school. Suddenly and without warning, I was violently slapped in the face by this man. This was an extraordinary experience. I ended up on my back; it is hard to say whether the shock or the pain was worse.

This was a huge man; his hand would have dwarfed my ten year old face. In shock while I was lay on the ground Hallam threatened me with further punishment. I quickly got up and made my way to my Grade Five room as I felt some safety in the presence of the new lay teacher.

When our class began after lunch our teacher asked me what had happened to my face. The boys later told me it was bright red from the blow.

I remained in fear and total intimidation from Brother Anselm so I told some story to cover up what happened.

Over the next hour or so the teacher slowly gained our trust and in the end we were giving her detailed accounts of our regular abuse and assaults from the previous year.

In the afternoon break the lay teacher was in deep discussion with the principle Brother [REDACTED] and Brother Anselm was removed from the school. My memory is that he was removed soon after the physical assault. I have since learnt that the lay teacher had made repeated complaints regarding Hallam's criminal assaults which were ignored by senior De La Salle Christian Brothers.

I heard in later years he was transferred to another school in the country.

I have been depressive for the best part of my life, in 2005 I was diagnosed with depression anxiety and since then have been hospitalised for depression and rehabilitation from substance abuse on five occasions.

I have at times had suicidal ideations and constant nightmares related to the abuse.

My marriage of thirty years ceased following my diagnosis in 2005 and my relationship with my children has also suffered greatly as a result of my breakdown.

I have a deep resentment towards the Catholic Church.

It disturbs me to see the church defending perpetrators and supporting their defence of crimes against innocent children, refusing to be honest about past crimes and being immune from normal natural justice processes such as investigation and prosecution for covering up criminal conduct.

Reports of abuse are a constant reminder of events that shook me up emotionally, caused me to lose faith in spirituality which in AA they say is a primary reason we abuse drink.

On a number of occasions my medication and drinking have nearly killed me.

There would be numerous witnesses of the events above but I cannot obtain a list of class mate from my investigations. There would be clear recollection of these crimes from others as the events were a significant impact on our young minds.

BROKEN RITES RECORDS

Br "Anselm" Hallam

This member of the De La Salle Brothers was born as Tom Hallam and adopted the "religious" name Anselm (sometimes also spelt Anselem), which was the name of a medieval "saint". "Brother Anselm" Hallam taught in the late 1960s at St Joseph's parish primary school, Malvern, in Melbourne, and also taught middle-school students at the neighbouring De La Salle College. According to numerous victims, he was a notorious molester. He invasively mauled the genitals of his pupils. He gave "sex lessons" (really just "dirty talk"), while masturbating under his clerical frock. A female teacher, who knew what Anselm Hallam was doing, complained to the school's head Brothers but they were not interested. Anselm Hallam died in the early 1990s, aged 92. One of his victims, who became a successful professional, has contributed an interview to the oral history collection at the National Library of Australia about his own professional career, and he included an account of his experiences at the hands of Brother Anselm Hallam.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There were not *'canings'*, these assaults were with a heavy, thick leather strap at times not only on hands but all over the body.

I recall a beating from Hallam that was across a grade four boys entire body in a fit of rage because he was late back from lunch.

Yours Sincerely

Rob Brown