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To: fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au  
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Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations

Mr Joseph Edison J M  
[REDACTED]

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**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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From: [REDACTED]  
Date: Mon, Sep 3, 2012 at 3:49 PM  
Subject: Submission: Sex Abuse by the Clergy Investigation  
fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Hello Ms/Sir,

Geoffrey Robertson's book The Case of the Pope is a MUST read for every member of the Investigative Committee. I have pasted some relevant extracts for your quick perusal.

Having been born into a Roman Catholic family, with several priests & nuns from both my pater's & mater's sides of the families, and having attended a catholic boys high school, I know enough about the crimes both priests and nuns have gotten away with; (I had a sister in a convent school who has shared some stories).

I urge the members of the committee to get courage from what Jesus said, about tying a mill stone round these criminals' necks and drowning them in the deepest ocean for having done what they did to the children.

They are a continuing shame to all decent humans, whether Christian or otherwise.

Best wishes.

Joseph Edison J M  
[REDACTED]

## The Case of the Pope

Posted on July 12, 2012 by @ndy

More sex abuse claims levelled at Catholic priest, 7.30 Report (ABC), Adam Harvey, July 10, 2012 (Updated July 11, 2012) | Unholy Silence, Geoff Thompson and Mary Ann Jolley, 4 Corners (ABC), July 2 (Updated July 4, 2012) | (Interview with) Judy Courtin, The Sydney Morning Herald, June 25, 2012.

Geoffrey Robertson, *The Case of the Pope*, Penguin, 2010, pp.164–166, p.174:

232. The evidence summarized in this book reveals three stunning, shameful and incontrovertible facts about the governance of the Catholic Church since Joseph Ratzinger became an archbishop (1979), the head of the CDF [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith] (1981) and Pope (2005):

- a. Tens of thousands, perhaps even a hundred thousand children and teenagers, mainly boys, have been sexually abused by the clergy, and most have been caused serious and long-term psychological damage.
- b. Thousands of clergy, known to be guilty of very grave crimes of a kind which most perpetrators have a propensity to commit again, have not been defrocked. They have been harboured by the church, moved to other parishes or countries and protected from identification and from temporal punishment — usually a prison sentence — under Canon Law protocols that offer them forgiveness in this world as well as the next.
- c. The Holy See, a pseudo-state, has established a foreign law jurisdiction in other friendly states pursuant to which, in utter secrecy, it has dealt with sex abusers in a manner incompatible with, and in some respects contrary to, the law of the nation in which it operates, and has withheld the evidence of their guilt from law enforcement authorities.

233. These three facts are incontestable — and inexcusable. There have, of course, been efforts by the church to excuse them, but they are either irrelevant or irrational. Originally, in November 2002, Cardinal Ratzinger was asserting that the crisis was no more than a ‘manipulated and planned campaign by the media: less than one per cent of priests are guilty of acts of this type’. This is demonstrably false: 4.3 per cent was the understated John Jay College figure and others put it as high as 6-9 per cent and warn that it might be higher if clergy misbehaviour in the developing world is ever subject to the kind of investigation that has been undertaken in Ireland and in America. The Pope and his Secretary of State, Bertone, then attributed the phenomenon to homosexual infiltration of the priesthood and to ‘gay culture’ — implying that gays are potential paedophiles — but the link has long been exploded by the John Jay study and the Vatican’s own 2003 Commission.

234. Many good Catholics, led by the eminent theologian Hans Kung, consider that the blame lies not only with the fallibility of the Pope and the secrecy and incompetence of the Vatican and the irresolution of its bishops, but with the rule that requires priests to remain celibate — a rule of no biblical origin (Christ’s disciples appear to have been married), but a dogma introduced in the eleventh-century and almost abolished by the sixteenth-century reformers.

A strong case can be made, on compassionate and on theological grounds as well, for permitting Catholic priests to marry, which would encourage more recruits to join the clergy and would alleviate the problem of some 'problem priests'. But marriage does not 'cure' paedophilia. Many offending priests are not paedophiles: their disordered personality is often ascribed to loneliness in their private lives or to the drugs and alcohol they take to oblivianize it. There is no overwhelming obstacle to their departing from the priesthood if they seek conjugal sex, and for this reason some do depart, while others lead a double life. The priests who molest children are frequently those who are the most punctilious in religious observances and in good works. The suspicion must be that for many, the combination of spiritual power, genuine affection and sexual craving led to acts which were committed because — and only because — there was no deterrent in the form of any likely prospect of arrest and punishment.

235. These men believed, with good reason, that they would get away with it, because priests usually did. They believed — with bad reason although it must have seemed the case — that they had exemption from local law because where sex abuse was concerned they had the grace of the bishop and the protection of a Canon Law which would rarely convict them, never punish them and only occasionally defrock them. They were led to believe that they had a dual form of nationality: they were subject to local law if they killed or robbed or parked illegally, and subject to church law if they sinned, whether by giving the sacrament to Baptists or Presbyterians, or by raping small children. They believed that the Holy See was a sovereign state with exclusive sovereignty over them in respect of child sex abuse, and the spiritual power to seal the lips of their victims. And every erring priest who underwent prayer and penance was promised forgiveness in this world and redemption in the next. Jesus may have said that those who make children suffer are to be drowned in the depths of the sea, but Pope Benedict XVI told his paedophile priests in Ireland that penitence offered them a life after death-jacket.

236. The Vatican's pretension to statehood cannot be separated from its child abuse crisis, because the crisis has exposed the fact that the church has operated a parallel, para-statal jurisdiction, forgiving sins that host states punish as crimes. Vatican critics have long harped upon how priests manned the 'ratline' that permitted some of the worst Nazis to make their escape to South America, but the real 'ratline' that it has been offering is an escape route to child sex abusers — not so much a 'get out of gaol free' card as a freedom never to be at risk of gaol. Through a mixture of arrogance, negligence, and recklessness borne of belief in its state immunity and its overweening desire to be a political actor on the world stage, the Pope and his army of cardinals, nuncios, archbishops and officials have run a church in which children have been suffering widespread and systematic abuse...

245. What will be required of the Vatican, as a signal of a new commitment to put children first, is the complete abandonment of Benedict's claim that the Holy See has the right to deal with suspected felons under an obscure, inefficient and secret ecclesiastical process. But Canon Law provides a form of power, and perhaps Benedict's fatal flaw is his attraction to power — to the pomp and circumstance of statehood, to the queues of world leaders who

come to bend at his knee and kiss his fisherman's ring, and to the satisfaction of having delegates promote his ideology with six seats at UN conference tables. Journalists often tell how this kindly old man offers to share his food with them, but an analysis of his behaviour suggests a man in thrall to power and unable to give any of it up — even for the sake of innocent children. When it ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Holy See quoted the words of John Paul II, to the effect that children 'are that precious treasure given to each generation as a challenge to its wisdom and humanity'. John Paul II himself, as we now know, failed that challenge by cosseting notorious child molesters and turning a blind eye to the mounting toll of child victims. So did his closest lieutenant, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. On the question of whether Benedict XVI is capable of the wisdom and humanity to protect the children of his church, the jury is out.

See also : The Case Of The Pope (Terry Eagleton's review, The Sydney Morning Herald, October 1, 2010) | Pell & Co. ~versus~ Deveny & Twitter... and memes (May 9, 2012) | Church & State & Suicide & Survival (April 13, 2012) | Suffer the Children : Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church (August 5, 2011) | Alas for you George! (July 9, 2008) | Ratso is funny... Pell... less so (July 8, 2008).