

INQUIRY INTO THE HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE BY RELIGIOUS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Submission from:

John Frederiksen

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

NOT CONFIDENTIAL

Background

I am a 67yo male Wine Maker / Farmer/ married 44 years with 2 adult sons. I was raised in a middle class catholic family of 7 siblings. At the age of thirteen I was sent to the St Vincent's College Bendigo. (Now Catholic College, Bendigo) At the age of fourteen I approached our form teacher/ pastoral carer Fr Hugh Murray for advice on my sexuality and catholic guilt about masturbation. Fr Murray arranged for me to meet him in private where he proceeded to get me to masturbate in front of him.

Disclosure

Family - At the age of 17 I disclosed what had happened to my older brother and to my father some years later. My wife have now known about the incident for many years.

NSW Trial Hugh Murray - Approximately 11 years ago I approached Broken Rites Melbourne seeking information about Hugh Murray. They informed me that he was known to the NSW Police and requested I contact them as there was a court case pending with Hugh Murray where he had been accused of sexual assault. I made a statement to the NSW police and met with the victim [REDACTED] of Sydney. I was called to be a witness but the case never proceeded. In late 2011 a court order was issued in NSW declaring that Hugh Murray was permanently declared medically unfit to plea despite 40 witnesses accusing him of sexual assault. Hugh Murray has been, with the help of the Catholic Church and his Vincentian Catholic Order, able to dodge the consequence of his actions for the past 11 years.

Task Force - NSW Police set up a Task force in Bathurst NSW 3 years ago involving five detectives investigating 12 Vincentian Catholic Order Clergy including Hugh Murray. I also made a statement to this task force in 2010

Action Taken

As stated above I have made statements to the NSW Police on two occasions and have on numerous occasions been prepared to attend court in NSW as a victim / witness. All the court appearances have never occurred due to Hugh Murray being declared ill.

I have been through the Catholic Church Towards Healing Process over the past two years resulting in a mediation meeting with the head of the Vincentian Catholic Order Fr Gregg Cooney. At this meeting in 2011 Fr Cooney admitted that the offence had taken place and offered compensation of \$5000 plus an apology. I refused the offer and stated I believed I was entitled to \$2000 compensation per year for 50 years of torment and mental suffering at a total of \$100,000. My request was refused.

In late 2011 [REDACTED] and myself along with two additional victims have joined forces seeking compensation using ACT Legal firm Porters. Through our lawyers the four of us have made considerable effort to seek compensation but have not been successful at this time.

We jointly wrote in 2011 to the Governor General in Canberra requesting that an Order of Australia bestowed on Hugh Murray be withdrawn. Returned correspondence indicates that the GG is still considering our request.

Conclusion

My complaint against the Catholic Church is as follows:

- I believe the Catholic Church has spent in excess of \$1 m in protection, and legal stalling techniques to stop Hugh Murray from facing court for the past 11 years.
- The Catholic Church Towards Healing program, has no teeth to direct the Catholic Church to compensate victims, despite their knowledge that the assaults took place etc.
- The institutionalisation of paedophile behaviour within the Catholic Church is verified by the ongoing investigation of the NSW Bathurst Police Task Force. Twelve clergy have been prosecuted or are being investigated for paedophile activity. It appears this behaviour has been condoned or at best swept under the carpet for decades.
- The Catholic Church continues to support paedophile staff with legal assistance, accommodation and stipends, even though they know and admit an offences have occurred.
- The amount of compensation offered to me, \$5000, is an insult. The 50 years of self-doubt, self-blame on a daily basis has been a major psychological problem for me. Where is the justice?

I thank and applaud the Victorian Government for having the tenacity to carry out this enquiry. I am willing to furnish all Police statements, Mediation reports and Towards Healing evaluations / reports if the inquiry wishes them to be tabled. I am also willing to appear before the inquiry and give permission for the inquiry to use my case as an example of the injustice that has been served by the Catholic Church on to one of its children some 50 years ago.

John Frederiksen