

From: Mark Prouse [REDACTED]
To: "fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au" <fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Date: 06/06/2013 01:14 PM
Subject: Submission to the committee

This is the Submission of Mark William Prouse to the investigatory committee into child sex abuse.

This Submission may be kept as public record, Thank you

Hello, My name is Mark William Prouse, I submit that I attended [REDACTED] primary school in [REDACTED] Vic from prep school until grade 6 , from 1970 to 1977.

At this school I was sexually abused on a few occasion's and molested during class buy one of the Christian brothers or a priest named Brother [REDACTED] or Brother [REDACTED] at the age of 8yrs old. The sexual abuse consisted of Him masturbating in front of me and two other boys in the back room of the church, then telling us to Masturbate in front of him, then performing Oral sex, getting me to ejaculate in his mouth and forcing me to kiss his penis, This happened on two occasions that I can remember but i have blocked allot of what happened out, this happened as we where changing for alter boy duties and religious education. I can remember been totally naked alone with him and leaving the back room of the church feeling that what he was doing was not right. Also on one occasion he came into the classroom to look after the class when our teacher was away, a friend of mine in class put up his hand to ask a question at which point he came over leaned over him and started rubbing his chest in an inappropriate way, I could see that the hole class could see this and I must do something about it, so I put up my hand to try and distract him away from my friend at which point he came over to me and strait away slid his hand under my shirt all the way down into my pants and grabbed my genitals and started masturbating me with his head next to me breathing into my ear, at which point I through back my chair to get his hand out of my pants and away from me, I looked up and sew the look on the faces of my classmates and ran out of class crying and shaking. I will never forget the look of shock on the faces of all my classmates, I was so embarrassed and so confused at why he had done this in front of everybody, it was supposed to be a secret that only happened in the back room of the Chappell. I could not face my friends and became very recluse and did not talk to anybody for a long time, i would go and hide every lunch and play time which led to me been severely bullied . I was an eight year old boy left to deal with been embarrassed and shamed in front of all my class mates. It was too much for me to handle and had a devastating effect on the rest of my life. I blame that one incident as been the most damaging in my life. I could not function properly in class , therefor did not get a very good education, I failed all my tests and got very low marks at primary and secondary school and was lucky to finish year 11.

The torment did not stop there, Also when we went to Harold Halt swimming pool for swimming lessons, The priest that sexually abused me came along to supervise us, of corse he had to supervise us getting changed into and out of our swimming trunks. I could not get changed in front of him, I did not want to take all my clothes of with him watching, I could not let him see me naked, I would get very nervous and start shacking, then all the kids would start making fun of me and push me around. I could tell that he was Masturbating under his white robe (priests coat ?) watching us get undressed, I was the only one that knew what he was doing.

I have many fears, many Anxiety's and have suffered many panic attacks all my life, I am very uncomfortable around other people, even people i have been working with for a few months. I find it impossible to keep a relationship and keep down a job. My life has been very lonely and filled with lots of pain and suffering with a very strong feeling that I do not fit in and I am not meant for this world. I have tried to kill myself 5 times, plus 2 times that I had no control over, and am lucky to be alive.

I felt to ashamed so did not report any of what happened to me to the school or to my parent's. I was 31yrs old when I first made an [REDACTED] I was told that there was not much that they can do but they will look in to it, I completely understood this, considering the time that had passed, I just wanted to tell someone in order to try and leave it behind me.

I was 35 when I reported the abuse to the Catholic Church. I spent a lot of time giving everdence on a number of occasions with no action been done. I felt like they were just trying to ware me down so I would give up. After 2yrs I was passed on to a student lawyer that said he will look into it for me, after 6 months he got back to me and said that there was no hope for any compensation or help with counseling. I felt that they did not want to help me and gave me the runaround. After some time I was directed to the Peter O'calahan process, I met with Peter O'calahan and gave a statement to him, it was very hard to go through the process again but I desperately needed some counseling. I was treated well by Peter O'calahan and was reassured that they would look into it. After some time I was asked to appear in front of a panel to give evidence. I gave evidence to the Panel then I received a letter in the mail stating that they where satisfied the evidence I gave was true and an offer of compensation was given and payment for counseling through an organization called Carelink. The offer of compensation was very small, less than \$28.000 , considering my hole life was in turmoil and I could not keep down a job for more than a few months , my potential to earn a real living and have a full life was taken away from me so i feel that this was an insult to what had happened to me.

In order to get this compensation I must sign a waver stating that I must not talk to anybody about the abuse and that the matter had been dealt with and no further legal prosecution was possible.

The church admitted guilt and I received an apology letter from arch bishop George Pell but they refuse to tell me the real name of the priest or brother that abused me or what happened to him. There were many instances after the abuse that teachers and staff would have realized my fear of that perpetrator, and started to cover it up. I remember the whole class having to strip down to our underwear and line up to be weighed and have our hight recorded during a class, my abuser was at the head of the line to "supervise" this, i was so sacred I kept on moving to the back of the line in fear, when it was eventually my turn, I pointed to my abuser in fear and said to my teacher (we don't have to take everything off in front of him do we ?). So I think they would have realized something was going on !! . Also the staff at Harold Holt swimming pool (where we went for swimming lessons) wondered why I was always the last one out of the change rooms, accompanied by my abuser, I looked at my abuser and pointed to him then ran away. So I think he was found out and either moved on or someone covered it all up.

In closing I would like to inform the panel that it took a long time and much effort to finally receive some counseling and compensation, even though I was not Raped with annal penetration, the abuse changed the corse of my entire life and effected my hole family in meany way's, I have been over

sensitive and troubled my whole life, my parents had to watch me fail at work and in life time and time again, my farther has had to support me financially time and time again or I would be out on the streets, my parents had to watch me go through so much pain and suffering. This has effected my hole family and will continue to do so.

Thank you for the chance to give evidence and tell my story.

Thank You.

Mark William Prouse

