

From: [REDACTED]

To: <fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au>

Date: 28/05/2013 12:43 PM

Subject: To the Committee Secretariat

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

[REDACTED]

To the Committee Secretariat

I have recently contacted the committee and asked if I could submit this information to you. They provided me your contact details.

On behalf of all the victims of these heinous crimes, I thank you for everything you are doing.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I wish to submit evidence and address some points for the enquiry. I truly thank the committee members for being part of this historical moment in time. I can be contacted by phone or email if you need to discuss anything.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

“Dear Sir, you are nothing but a punter!” Those were the words I was accused of after refusing to accept \$2,000.00 by a legal representative of the church. Within four hours later, I ended up receiving over \$200,000.00. It was strange as there was no celebration, no relief, no closure. The money meant nothing other than assist my family a little. In the process of preparing to take action against the church, I became a recluse, unable to manage my own business and it collapsed, was

placed on medication, and we lost our house, and a car, and we were labelled as homeless. It was a difficult time as my wife was expecting our second child. The money didn't mean a thing. I just wanted the church to be held accountable. I was told my case became a benchmark to open up the floodgates for other victims. That was a good feeling. I have addressed some issues from the Submission guide as well as providing some extra information that I have written.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Reporting the abuse

10.1 Could you tell anyone about what happened?

I was overwhelmed at the time about what to do. Some teachers had disappeared suddenly, and there were many rumours going around about kids being abused. I didn't know who to trust. I worked up the courage to inform the Principal Brother [REDACTED] within weeks of the abuse commencing. He said he would investigate the matter and promised it would stop. It never did. He also said not to tell my father as he would be humiliated and may lose his job (he was a policeman) over my allegations as I may not be able to prove they actually occurred. The Principal actually lost his job a short time later. Hmmmm? He was contacted by my solicitor 18 years ago and denied any conversation took place between us about this.

10.2 Did you feel discouraged from reporting the abuse?

I was told that it would be handled by the Principal and he instructed me not to tell anyone else. I was also threatened by the offender that I would be kicked out of school, my family was threatened and he claimed he would do the same to my sister if I made any mention of this to anyone. I also had a cousin at the school who he was now paying more attention to. My cousin suicided a few years later.

10.3 Who did you tell about what happened?

At the time the Principal was informed. I was treated differently by all of the teachers after that and was made to feel guilty. We had teachers being charged for similar offences at the time. And I was reminded by the Principal not to speak about this to anyone. My offender became my main classroom teacher and again continued to harass me. I was forced to leave shortly after.

10.4 How long after the abuse occurred did you tell someone?

I finally got the courage to speak to the Principal a few weeks after the first offence. He said the abuse would stop. But it never did. It got worse.

I think I made it worse because I reported the offender.

10.5 Did you tell the religious body or other organisation about the abuse?

Yes, The principal at Marist Brothers [REDACTED]

10.6 If you delayed in telling or reporting what prevented you from disclosing earlier?

I was 12 years old. I was scared. The offender kept reminding me not to speak of this. He made threats against my sister. He also told me not to go to the police, as I would be called a liar and be expelled from the college.

10.7 What was the initial response from the organisation?

Nothing at the time. When I turned 34, I had heard that other students had come forward and reported the same offender to the police. A phone call made to the church referred me to attend a session with an Independent commissioner from the church. Initially he claimed he was shocked to hear what I said and later did not believe me. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Later, frustrated with this response, I contacted the Police Child Protection unit and also reported the offence.

10.8 If there was an investigation of the abuse, how was it conducted?

My case was handled by Police Prosecutor [REDACTED] who mentioned that I was wasting his time as it was so long ago and I should just 'move on'. He was unenthusiastic in court and had arrived ill prepared. It was humiliating for us.

10.9 What meetings or other interactions did you have with the organisation?

A few meetings took place with the independent commissioner. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I also wrote to George Pell a few times telling him about the incidents at the college but he gave no reply.

10.10 Were you encouraged or supported to report your abuse to the police?

Definitely not.

Did you do this?

Yes. But only when I was 34.

10.11 What were the consequences for the perpetrator(s)?

Charged, but placed on good behaviour bond.

10.12 What were the effects of the response to the disclosure on the victim and other individuals? (eg. Family members, other members of the organisation)

I entered a period of great depression. Placed on medication and sort psychological help. My wife was shocked and encouraged me to report it and seek medical assistance. My mother was devastated and felt responsible. The church accused me of lying. I have never recovered from this period.

10.13 Were you supported by the organisation? If so, how?

The Independent commissioner suggested I speak to a church counselling group. [REDACTED]

They offered no real support. I sort a private counsellor, it was more beneficial.

10.14 Did you receive counselling or psychological help? If so, who provided it?

I received counselling from [REDACTED]. Wonderful, understanding lady. The church paid for this.

10.15 Did you receive an apology or an acknowledgment of the abuse you had suffered?

An apology was never received. Only a statement of regret that it had occurred. Even when compensation was paid, they still doubted my accusations and claimed I had exaggerated things.

10.16 How adequate was the support that was offered?

Support from the Church counsellor group was absolute nonsense and a waste of time. Support from local counsellor was valuable.

10.17 Did the religious or other organisation accept responsibility for what happened?

Never.

10.18 What was the consequence for the perpetrator(s)?

The Offender was charged on several other rapes and child abuse but each time received a suspended sentence.

10.19 Were you offered an apology, compensation or other forms of assistance?

Apology; no. But I was locked in a small room and forced to watch a video from George Pell admitting the Church had regrets that a few things may have occurred to a few parishioners. And now we all had to move on with our lives.

Compensation; yes over \$200,000.00

If so, were there any conditions attached to accepting that compensation or assistance?

I was not to speak to the media about this, or mention the settlement arrangement to anyone. I was told I would have to repay this, if I broke this agreement.

10.20 As a result of your complaint to the religious or other organisation what actions were taken by them?

To my knowledge, nothing changed. I believe the offender was interviewed and denied most accusations about me and the other boys, Then later claimed he had a bad memory on events. Though years later in court he pleaded guilty and pretended to be remorseful, to avoid jail sentence..

10.21 How long did it take to achieve a result?

About three years through Law Firm Holding Redlich. [REDACTED]

10.22 Were you satisfied with the process in dealing with the complaint and/or the result?

No. Pathetic. I was treated very poorly and was disgusted by all of it. I was made to feel like a criminal, and told I should not be accusing the church of misbehaviour

10.23 What was your view of the effectiveness and adequacy of any compensation, either offered or received?

I wanted an apology. But instead they gave me money. It meant nothing. There was 22 years of pain and hardship, it was never about the money.

Originally I was blackmailed into taking a few thousand dollars to go away, but I never did. I wanted justice for me and the other victims who had not come forward but were doing it hard in life. I know of some who ended up in mental institutions.

10.24 What were the effects of the result on you and other individuals? (eg. Family members and supporters)

Only my wife knew of this. It was hard on her as she was pregnant at the time of the outcome. We didn't celebrate anything. Just glad it was over.

I'm still very depressed about all of this and even more so that it is still continuing today.

I'm sorry for the length. I was/still angry. I wrote this below in one sitting. I do a bit of writing and I am now focussing on human rights issues. I wrote this recently to send to you.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

There is no worse scum on this planet than a paedophile preying on the young, the naive, the disabled, the gullible, the inexperienced, the unawared, or the dysfunctional. These parasites of our society are highly deviously intelligent and do their homework, and they target in on minority groups and focus on individuals. They befriend families, with one purpose; to befriend their little children. They heavily scrutinise our children's behaviour in the playgrounds, the schoolyards, the school camps, classrooms or the shopping centres. They take notes about their conduct, how they act, where they hang out, where they practice sport, and where they often meet. They photograph our children and some even video their activities.

They fantasise about our kids as they walk around. They hope the wind will raise the little girl's dresses as they run by. They get all gooey inside when they see a little boy bend over to pick up a ball. They dream of touching them. They long to taste them, they long to have them, they dream about having these children conducting some form of sexual behaviour over their own bodies. They become delusional of owning them, and wanting to obtain their innocence or virginity as prizes. They fantasise on owning these children and sharing them with their miserable pathetic colleagues. After making contact and conducting in the most extreme poor behaviour, they then make threats against their victims, they place fear in them, they blackmail them. Most of the worst type of demeanour has occurred within the sanctuary of the enigmatic boundaries of the catholic church.

I cannot comprehend how too many people in the highest legal office of the land can sit on their hands and do not consider proper justice for the thousands who have had their lives impacted upon by these atrocious creatures, those unfortunate victims who have not 'moved on' from being violated in the most unspeakable ways. Every paedophile should be given a life sentence in jail, they do not belong in our communities. There is no hope of them rehabilitating or 'getting better' or changing their ways. They are programmed to harm our children and will always do so. It is embedded in their DNA. Once a paedophile – always a paedophile. The very worst of these grotesque creatures are living/have lived amongst and supported in the Catholic Church religious structure

On behalf of these thousands of victims of sexual assault and other heinous misdemeanours, I am grateful for the announcement of an enquiry into the atrocious behaviour of those wretched creatures still hiding within the walls of the Catholic Church, who have got away with destroying so many lives, and those others who have shifted within our suburbs who continue to visualise themselves having sexual relationships or encounters with our children. It is time that they, and the many others who have protected them, were made accountable for their despicable actions.

When these individuals are identified within the church's boundaries, they are spoken to by their superiors about their behaviour, and do they report them to the police? Not at all, they discuss with them that their unspeakable activities have been identified. They are informed that maybe now they are under scrutiny, and then so often they transfer them to other suburbs/parishes, with nothing but a soft tap-on-the-shoulder warning. They are also provided advice on how to better disguise their dismal desires of our children.

As a good lawyer will only ask the question he/she already knows the answer to, so too is the reason why our politicians had not raised the question in the past; Would a Royal Commission into the

I wish to share my bizarre experiences of 'assistance' from the Catholic Church in my hour of need. It is a method called CIP; the very discriminative Church's Inquiry Process. It is a procedure that takes witness statements, manages damage control and then attempts to bribe victims for their silence. The offenders are not punished, they are simply tapped on the shoulder and informed that they have been named for being ill-disciplined, and are probably under investigation. "Best to keep under the radar" they are told. The first step is to discuss your grievances with a church appointed independent commissioner – already that sounds like a conflict of interest.

I was first sexually assaulted as an eleven year old at a school camp. I just had a series of operations and was a little secluded from my friends. I was 'selected' from about 180 children to be the 'chosen one' by a sex offender. Lucky me hey! He was a teacher at the College. At first I was so naïve that I wasn't even aware what was happening. Years of harassment followed, threats were made to harm my other family members, being blackmailed into saying that my friends would also be hurt, and that any admission of this would humiliate my family. I was later informed by him that the whole thing was my fault. Apparently, I asked for it.

I was stupid enough to hope that while he was paying attention to me that he was leaving my school mates alone. This cut short my education and I struggled forming friendships. I would later discover that this teacher, who as a trainee priest had previously sexually assaulted others in South Australia a few years earlier and was transferred to Melbourne to avoid any further investigations.

As an 11 year old, I brought this interference on me to the attention of the headmaster, a Marist Brother at the college. His first words were; "Who else have you told?" and his last words were "Not to tell anyone else, as he would deal with it." He never did. And in the near future the offender would replace him as Principal. In case you didn't quite comprehend this statement; The Marist Brothers appointed a known child sex offender as their school principal. A man they knew had raped and sexually assaulted children in another state and who 'they' relocated to [REDACTED] to avoid any bad publicity. I left school when I was fourteen after the offender became my main teacher and demanded more sexual favours. This never eventuated but I was now left on my own. It was a very difficult time. I wanted to end my life on the night of my first assault, I wanted to just walk into the calm waters and drown near the beach camp where it all occurred. I sat there for hours in the middle of the night, but somehow found a little courage to continue. I had big dreams of completing College, was an A grade student in some areas, but as I walked home from school on that last day, there again I just wanted to end it all. I considered I had no future. I had a few near misses of being hit by trucks in the main street near school. I couldn't even get that right. I thought I was coward not being able to die when I wanted to. Throughout my life, I have spent years working with disabled and disadvantaged children. They were good times.

Several years past and I read in a local paper about some young men taking action against the same offender who were also victims at the time my offences occurred. I couldn't believe how dense I was thinking that I would be the only one. Even worse when I felt responsible because it appeared that I was the first he offended at this school, and if I had done more to have him removed, maybe the crimes against the others may not have occurred. I was actually reminded of this by one of the victims at a Magistrates court. You could not comprehend the enormous guilt I felt. It is a burden I've had to carry all my life. My own investigations have uncovered 42 cases of sexual abuse by this

man. At my old school there have been two suicides [REDACTED] and many others have struggled with relationships and have sort medical advice for severe depression, and some have even ended up in mental health institutions. All because of this man. And maybe because of me, because I did not do enough at the time. With all of this guilt, I wanted to end my life again.

After hearing about these cases in the local papers, I also pursued police intervention to have him charged. While the Victorian Police Child Abuse investigation squad were brilliant, we were all disappointed in the lethargic attitude of the police prosecutor at [REDACTED] Police station who didn't show much interest in the charges. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. He was ill prepared in the courtroom, and left us staggered with his unprofessionalism, and the judge made his decision based on the little evidence that was presented. He failed to provide the judge with our Victim Impact Statements, so we had to personally present these to him. For some unknown reason, we were advised not to give any evidence. One thing the prosecutor failed to tell the Magistrate was that the offender was originally charged of sexually abusing other children interstate. Sadly for many, his abuse had continued. The prosecutor showed no empathy towards our group of young men who had come forward to bring charges against the offender. He not only failed us, he failed our supportive families.

I have another major regret in life, it was the fact that I stopped a colleague of mine from killing the bastard paedophile in court after the judge provided a very lenient sentence and placed him on a good behaviour bond. My mate hurled himself at him and began belting the daylights out of him. I dragged him off the offender. I should have joined in instead of restraining him. The argument of why the offender sexually interfered with so many children was because his mother used to lock him in a cupboard when he was a child, for disciplinary purposes. Poor sod. It's a pity she didn't leave him there. The offender received a two year good behaviour bond, no conviction recorded. He again was given the same sentence a few years later, after new charges arose from other victims coming forward.

If we achieved one thing in this time it was that we got the offender dismissed from his new workplace, where after sexually assaulting 42 children that we know of, he went to work as a supervisor with intellectually disabled children. Who knows what sickening offences went undetected in this place? I got him dismissed from there after informing his employers about the monster they had at their premises.

Not long after, he was in front of a judge again for a third time, for his crimes at Marist Brothers. On this occasion, he was sentenced to 2½ years jail but was suspended for 2½ years. No time behind bars. We were convinced he had friends in high places of the so-called legal system.

I had heard that the Catholic Church had set up a program to assist in the healing for those who have been sexually abused within the Church's structure. I thought it was a good place to start. After making some enquiries I was referred to an independent Commissioner who has 'handling' these matters. I was told that The Church now begged us for forgiveness and that everything would be

done to assist in the healing process. It sounded appropriate. But the whole program was rubbish and totally inappropriate.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Independent Commissioner notified me to attend the Church's selected group of trauma counsellors in Fitzroy. All appointments would be paid for. I was struggling with all of this and thought that this was a good thing. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I was informed that an apology would be given. I was told George Pell would provide it. George, who was a Bishop at the time in Victoria, had earlier lived with and later accompanied convicted paedophile Fr Ridsdale to court. Ridsdale had been charged for sexually abusing 40 children.

It was considered there may have been dozens of victims as well who has reported this vile monster to the church and who had sort psychological assistance, but had not gone to the police. He was often moved around various suburbs as complaints about him were brought to the Church's attention. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I was placed in a room in a front of a television and a video of George Pell appeared. George Pell the movie star – that was different. I was left alone to watch this. George was at his best dancing around making insincere apologies about the way victims had been treated. Never admitting he was sorry or admitting any guilt by the church. I remember thinking that he looked evil. I recall thinking this man is one of those responsible for my pain and for the pain of hundreds of others. He knew of the abuse that was occurring to many families but did nothing. He appeared disgusted that he was forced to do

this. I thought he was appalled at us for making accusations against his Church. [REDACTED]

A new approach was needed. The nonsense had to be stopped. Someone had to make them accountable for their inactions. I considered that I needed private treatment and my local doctor assisted me with this. The only way to hurt them the most was to seek legal intervention.

A few weeks later I walked up and down Williams Street, our legal precinct, and visited many law firms over several days. I spoke to a lot different solicitors about what had taken place. Many had claimed that nothing would be gained in pursuing the matter and that many allegations were refuted and often suppressed by the Church. "They are too big to take on" I was reminded several times. I thought that this is absolutely absurd. I was also told that a person on their own would find it hard to fight the Catholic Church and that I should give up any suggested action and move on. I had heard words 'move on' too often by now, so I did the opposite.

I found a very caring, sympathetic professional lawyer who was appalled at what had taken place and assisted me. He advised that I was entitled to financial compensation for personal damages, loss of education and many other things. I liked the word 'entitled' but was more interested in having the Church held responsible. After a few years, a settlement took place. I finally got what I was entitled to. My closure came in exposing the church for what they really are – a safe haven for the absolute worst kind of criminals. Did I feel guilty taking a cheque from the Church who had turned its back on me? No. I have always said that no money would have been exchanged if they had only said "we are sorry".

Throughout the period a group called 'Broken Rites' were very supportive. As was the kind words provided by [REDACTED]

To this day, I am still hearing that Priests are acting inappropriately, molesting parishioners, and still abusing children. The church claims they have a better process for any victims to come forward and discuss any issues with them. Don't waste your time. [REDACTED]

I plea to anyone who has been ill-treated by a member of the church to report it to the police. It can even be anonymous if you wish. Discuss your options with those who can make a difference – not those who just want the allegations suppressed. Make a stand for yourself. It is a little difficult at first but worth it. The church website of cam.org.au states that claims of up to \$75,000 are available to victims of abuse by church members. But I advise many of those potentially seeking to settle for some type of entitlement of compensation that may assist them moving on, because I got three times more than that figure.

I now work in the field of human rights, and advise many victims of crime to seek justice where possible.