



RESTORING THE FACE OF JESUS

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FOR the INNOCENTS

**Developing a Restorative Healing
Strategy for the Catholic Dioceses of
Australia**

RESTORING THE FACE OF JESUS

“Solemnly, I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

“Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in me, would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck. Alas to the world that there should be such obstacles! Obstacles indeed there must be, but alas for the man who provides them!

“....See that you never despise any of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven....It is never the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.”

Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 18, verses 2 – 7, 10 & 14.

PENTECOST, 2018 (revised)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the Innocents (2018) **Restoring the Face of Jesus: Developing a Restorative Healing Strategy for the Catholic Dioceses of Australia** (For the Innocents, Melbourne)

The victim survivors of clerical child sexual abuse (CCSA) have a special claim upon the Church, its leaders and agencies and the Australian Catholic community generally for Jesus Himself was abused and tortured in His crucifixion, naked on the cross. This restorative healing strategy is directed towards their healing, and it has been designed by *For the Innocents* whose members include primary and secondary victims whose input has been critical as well as former students, both ordained and non-ordained, of Corpus Christi seminary in Melbourne.

The document briefly outlines some of the main findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It then details the current CCSA context, including the need for a broader, coordinated response by the Australian Church, the challenges in the full implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, the continuing sexual abuse of children in Catholic institutions across the world, the lack of full recognition of the ongoing pain still suffered by victims, the limited capacity of diocesan priests to effectively respond, especially in ‘hotspot’ parishes where there was much abuse, the growing presence of international priests and the intergovernmental issues about the redress scheme.

The strategy outlines four objectives: (a) to bring about dialogue and trust in the spirit of Christian reconciliation between the Australian diocesan and eparchy leadership and the various advocacy and support groups in ensuring a whole-of-community approach in the rebuilding of the Australian Catholic community (b) to re-imagine completely a multifaceted response, perhaps outside the umbrella of the Church, built around a Gospel theme and addressing the ongoing needs of survivors (c) to work with religious personnel in implementing a restorative approach and a child protection strategy right across the Church in all its institutions and (d) to implement all the 21 recommendations of the Royal Commission that apply directly to the Catholic Church.

Finally, the 22 strategies are outlined at the conclusion of the document pertaining to (i) the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and diocesan bishops (ii) diocesan initiatives (iii) compensation and redress (iv) parish initiatives (v) support structures at diocesan and parish levels and (vi) the areas of communication, education and research. The appendices contain a listing of some of the more important recommendations by the Royal Commission, a parish action model for addressing CCSA and a formal apology to victims delivered in 2012 by *For the Innocents*.

Introduction

1. The victim survivors, both children and vulnerable adults, of clerical child sexual abuse (CCSA) committed by perpetrators in Catholic settings have a special claim upon Church leaders, Catholic agencies and the Catholic community generally in every Australian diocese and eparchy. Jesus Himself was abused and tortured as he was crucified, naked on the cross. As Catholics, like the Israelites of old, we must recognize our collective guilt for, as the Prophet Nehemiah highlights, “The Israelites, in sackcloth and with dust on their heads, assembled for a fast...they stood confessing their sins and the transgressions of their ancestors” (Neh. 9, 1 & 2).

This restorative healing strategy is directed towards the healing of the spiritual, psychological and physical scars that have resulted from crimes committed against the victim survivors, even many decades ago, by church personnel, mainly priests and male religious brothers, but also lay employees.

The Gift of Children

2. During his life on earth Jesus revolutionised attitudes to little children as we have seen in Matthew 18, 3 – 14. Jesus calls on each of us to eschew our childishness and embrace the spirit of childlikeness. Children, each of whom is *capax Dei in aeternum*, are our most precious resource. Born of their mothers in the pain of childbirth, children are graced by their innocence, vulnerability and powerlessness, entering a risk-laden, hazardous world enveloped in its corruption and sinfulness which impacts differentially upon them but whose parents and other responsible carers are called to love, nurture, educate and protect.

With their natural simplicity of vision, children have the curiosity, expectancy and openness to mystery and the spiritual realm with their sense of wonder and awe at the world and its vastness, its flora and fauna and its human diversity. They are possessed by a trustful immediacy and spontaneity with their authenticity and singular real-ness. Their intuition is to directly sense realities rather than rely on cold rationality. In their capacity for ritual and imagining and for laughter and humor, we see the grace of God at work. In their multifaceted growth patterns, children are always becoming and developing, whether in their language, their knowledge or their skills just as the Church is called to develop and grow in her understanding of the Christian message and to act accordingly. In children, we become aware of the mystery of God. In educating children about their own self-protection, the message must be built around the axiom: NO trespassing: this is MY body.

The 2017 Report of the Royal Commission

3. In December 2017, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse delivered its 17-volume report and its over 400 recommendations in this and previous reports. The key recommendations for the Catholic Church are contained in Appendix One. It found that, using its private sessions data in which the Royal Commissioners heard from 6,875, survivors, 61.8 per cent of those who disclosed about their sexual abuse in religious settings were abused in Catholic institutions sponsored by 42 different Catholic authorities such as dioceses and religious orders. Using the claims for redress data, the Royal Commission found that 4,444 claimants alleged incidents of child sexual abuse in 4,756 reported claims to Catholic authorities.

In a series of scarifying results, comparable to the US and Irish evidence, the Australian Royal Commission, using the figure weighted for length of pastoral service since 1950, found that between 1950 and 2012, one in thirteen diocesan priests, one in seventeen religious order priests and an estimated one in eight religious brothers sexually offended against children. It further found that the

offending was worst in the regional diocese of Sale. Sale was followed by the Sandhurst (Bendigo), Port Pirie and Lismore dioceses and it was least in the archdiocese of Adelaide. It was more pervasive and horrific in some of the residential care settings, especially those run by the religious Brothers of St John of God and the Christian Brothers.

Altogether there were 572 known Catholic priest offenders and 597 known religious brother offenders. Of all Catholic priests who ministered in Australia between 1950 and 2010, 7 per cent were alleged to have offended and claims made against them. There were 96 offending religious sisters. As well, there were an additional 543 known lay offenders who sexually abused children in Catholic settings. An unknown number offended against vulnerable adults.

Aims and Origins of the Restorative Healing Strategy

4. This healing strategy, originally developed in March 2015 and now updated in light of the Report of the Royal Commission, has been particularly developed for consideration by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the constituent Catholic dioceses and eparchies of Australia, including for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Oceania's largest diocese and one of the largest in the Asia-Pacific region, from where this initiative of *For the Innocents* emanates. Our original 2015 document received responses more from the archdioceses than the regional dioceses, namely, Adelaide, Ballarat, Brisbane, Darwin, Melbourne, Parramatta, Perth, Sydney and Wagga Wagga as well as from the general secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Only five in their responses gave an indication of a real and authentic engagement with a healing strategy.

It has been developed by the support group called *For the Innocents* which is comprised of innocent victim survivors, their parents, family members, friends, fellow parishioners, their teachers, support volunteers and whistleblowers together with former seminarians, former priests as well as active priests who studied together at the Corpus Christi interdiocesan seminary in Melbourne in previous decades – many are trained professionals in psychology, social work and associated disciplines as well as in Catholic theology. Women in particular have played a leading role in supporting victims, in leading advocacy organizations and in doing the necessary research in the many studies across the world.

In 2012, on the steps of the Victorian Parliament during the Parliamentary Inquiry into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse which resulted in the report, *Betrayal of Trust, For the Innocents* proclaimed a formal apology “to you, the victims, survivors – the innocents – and to your families and friends for the pain, trauma, isolation and unwarranted guilt you may have carried as a result of sexual or other abuse by Catholic clergy, religious teachers or workers”. The full text of the apology is contained in Appendix Two.

5. The word ‘survivors’ has been increasingly used to describe victims of CCSA though the word is not used in Jewish circles because of its use in relation to the Third Reich Holocaust. Another term now commonly in use is simply ‘the abused’. All these terms will be used interchangeably in this document. Both terms were used by the Royal Commission. Another technicality regards the use of the term ‘clerical’. The term is reserved for ordained clergy, and does not technically apply to religious brothers. This point is noted and accepted. However, for the purposes of this document and for simplification, the term ‘clerical’ will be retained to cover both ordained priestly ministers and male religious brothers. Another alternative is to use ‘religious’ though this would incorporate female religious – this would be unfair. Female religious abusers have been relatively uncommon as noted

above. Another alternative would be ‘male religious’ and this will be used on occasions as appropriate.

6. This document has been developed by *For the Innocents* (FtI) based on (i) the findings of the various Victorian and NSW parliamentary findings (ii) the December 2017 Report of the Royal Commission (iii) research studies from across the world (iv) our knowledge of the Church, its structure and mission and, most importantly, (v) the input from the abused themselves. The Royal Commission did not make any specific set of recommendations regarding a healing strategy except in terms of redress though its very last recommendation was that a national memorial for victims and survivors should be built in Canberra by the Australian Government (Rec. 17.6).

Healing Gardens

7. We would hope that the Australian bishops can work with the National Office of Child Safety and with survivors in designing this memorial in the national capital. We would hope that this national memorial would incorporate a therapeutic garden of healing. We would further hope that other gardens of healing can be constructed in parishes, schools and other institutional sites, especially where horrendous abuse took place. Through giving access to the beauty and glories of nature, such gardens can provide restorative and spiritually and emotionally calming relief, soothingly reduce stress and anxiety and improve a survivor’s sense of well-being and hopefulness as research attests. The seasonal cycle of nature highlights the long, enduring but changing patterns of life and death.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

8. Forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of the healing process. Too much cheap forgiveness have been characteristic of the destructive past, and appropriate restitution, especially in the confessional, has never been made. Our Anglican brothers in the U.K. in their document *The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church*, have reminded us that “in real life, forgiveness is rarely a straightforward exchange between victim and perpetrator in which complete repentance is met by complete forgiveness. Rather than being an episode or an event, forgiving is better understood as a long journey to struggle with the claims of justice and mercy, during the course of which forgiveness emerges”.

The Current CCSA Context

9. The present situation is characterised by the following elements:

- The urgent need for a broader coordinated pastoral response by the Australian Church and its individual dioceses in reconciling the past and developing a quality healing strategy for CCSA survivors. It moves beyond *The Towards Healing Response* and *The Melbourne Response* and the associated work of CareLink since 1996, and beyond the terms of reference of the recently formed Catholic Professional Standards Ltd and it incorporates the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission
- The continuing difficulties that episcopal leadership faces to address the restorative healing issue through a coordinated and responsive strategy that will be at the centre of their implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission
- The growing number of CCSA survivors who have disclosed, often as result of the publicity from the two parliamentary inquiries in Victoria and NSW and from the private sessions of

the Royal Commission and invariably many years later, who are still in pain. As is clear from overseas reports, including from Ireland and the U.S., it is manifest that children are today being abused, not least in the Church's 9,200+ orphanages, particularly in India and Italy, because the underlying reasons have not been addressed

- The deep and continuing reluctance of many of the abused to seek assistance from Church agencies and Church personnel precisely because of the way they have been treated by Church authorities, leading often to re-traumatization and to a loss of faith and of trust in the organization founded by Jesus Christ
- The lack of full recognition by the Church of the pain still being suffered by secondary victims (family members and other relatives) and tertiary victims (whistleblowers, teachers, parishioners) as well as those who took statements from the abused
- The failure of the Church's large social service organizations to respond effectively and appropriately in a coordinated way because of the quarantining of support efforts into the CareLink agency of the Melbourne archdiocese as one example
- Based on our collective experience, the limited capacity of diocesan priests both to respond to the CCSA crisis and to give leadership at a local level notwithstanding the availability of support personnel in some dioceses
- The limited capacity of 'hotspot' or priority parishes where much clerical abuse took place to respond in any meaningful way to the many primary and secondary victims resident in the particular parish and in explaining why CCSA took place and why the Church's response was so inadequate
- The growing presence of international priests whose knowledge of the clerical sex abuse catastrophe and knowledge of the Australian Catholic culture are very limited – this issue was noted in the recommendation of the Royal Commission, and their lack of knowledge will have to be addressed by the bishops
- The June 2018 agreement between the Commonwealth and State governments over the funding of redress schemes after the prior impasse

10. The overall aim of any restorative healing strategy for the CCSA abused is to provide a specially customised, flexible and quality support service focused principally on primary and secondary victims, however also taking into account the needs of priests and other religious personnel and local Catholic communities generally, especially priority parishes where much abuse took place, sometimes over several decades (see Appendix Three for a Parish Action Model). Its aim is to build on and expand and to re-vision the current diocesan strategies if they happen to be in place. Any strategy needs to recognize that in many cases the faith of many survivors was damaged, if not destroyed, by the trauma of their abuse. FtI's recommended elements of a sound community-based response to CCSA forms part of this document. How key Catholic agencies could contribute to an overall strategy needs to be explored.

11. Another element is the ripple effect of abuse impacting upon secondary and tertiary victims who may, among many other feelings, have deep residual guilt for not having prevented the abuse or not having read incipient signs or so-called red psychological flags with greater perceptiveness.

The Church, in moving beyond its own gross failures over many, many decades in its own *metanoia*, has the opportunity to also reach out to vulnerable adults and the victims of child sexual abuse in family settings which is a greater problem than institutional abuse.

CCSA Support Organizations

12. The support situation is very varied across Australia. In the Archdiocese of Melbourne, five organizations are known to currently work in the area of assisting CCSA survivors and there may be others. There have been other organizations across Australia which have worked in advocating for victims and their families. These groups will be known to episcopal authorities. All groups have worked long and hard for victims though it does seem preferable for better and closer coordination amongst them even though there are very good relationships and communication channels between the many organizations. All support and advocacy organizations have as their overarching objective the desire of justice and healing for the victims even though they approach the issue from different perspectives and with varying objectives.

Healing and Trauma-Informed Care

13. The Royal Commission during its duration funded the ASCA (Adults Surviving Child Abuse) organization to conduct workshops on trauma-informed practice as a relatively new paradigm of service delivery because the current systems are inadequate and because re-traumatization can be minimized. The word ‘trauma’ implies the seriousness of the impact upon the child. It cannot be simply dismissed with a comment such as, ‘why can’t you move on?’ It also emphasizes that positive relational experiences such as through support groups and befriending programs have demonstrated healing content.

14. Trauma is a state of high arousal in which normal coping mechanisms are overwhelmed by the perception of threat and accompanied by the mobilization of innate biological responses of fight, flight or freeze. The response can either be characterized as **hyperarousal** with emotional reactivity, disorganized chaos and heightened sensations or **hypoarousal** with emotional numbing, disassociation and disabled thinking, even a catatonic state in contrast to normal arousal levels. Trauma only becomes pathological if it is not resolved satisfactorily, and the effects are well documented, including the impact on brain functioning.

15. It is now accepted that the structure of the brain can change in response to traumatic experiences. Some have employed the notion of ‘social brain’ which is built up over time with neural growth activated by experiences of relationships just as in language acquisition a child placed in front of a television set with no relational interaction will never learn to speak. Traumatic events are kept in the memory of the body. Usually organizational shifts are required that incorporate the five dimensions of safety, trustworthiness, collaboration, choice and empowerment in developing a healing strategy – those dimensions being the exact opposite of what victims have experienced. The foundational notion of safety is key, incorporating the personal, interpersonal, environmental and systemic dimensions (see Appendix Four)

Developing an Overall Mission

16. What are the objectives in a Restorative Healing Strategy? The following four objectives seem to be at the core of developing a broadened quality diocesan response:

- (a) To bring about dialogue and trust in the spirit of Christian reconciliation between the Australian diocesan and eparchy leadership and the various advocacy and support groups in:**
 - (i) acknowledging in a reparational and restitutorial way how the past is to be acknowledged and reconciled**
 - (ii) developing a coordinated, customized, flexible and quality strategy to support CCSA victims with their multifaceted needs using the detailed knowledge and resources available from survivors, advocates, church personnel and professional experts**
 - (iii) ensuring a whole-of-community approach for the protection of our children and**
 - (iv) beginning the rebuilding process of the whole Christian community, children, parents and families, priests, religious and the hierarchy back into that vision Jesus held of His Church**

The various advocacy and support groups have had a difficult relationship with Church authorities as they brought into the public arena the knowledge and extent of CCSA. Church authorities in turn had difficulty in grasping the extent of the problem and were badly hampered by the Holy See and the gross limitations of canon law and by some questionable legal and insurance advice, as was seen in the evidence given in the parliamentary inquiries and to the Royal Commission over the past five years.

Now is the time for the Church to move on with a new healing vision. What unites Church authorities, the abused themselves and their families as well as secondary victims, together with the support and advocacy groups is a common goal of together assisting the primary and secondary victims in the years ahead and to develop both a common mission and a set of strategies in an environment of faith. The process of creating cohesion in working together will need to be conducted in a spirit of dialogue facilitated by a recognized expert in dialogue and who has knowledge of the Church and its culture.

- (b) To re-imagine completely a multifaceted response, perhaps totally outside the umbrella of the Church, by renaming and reframing previous responses, by building the response around a selected theological or gospel theme and by addressing in a pastoral rather than a legal way, the areas of compensation and redress as well as addressing the ongoing needs which in some cases are lifelong that arise from the pain, suffering and disadvantage arising from the victims' trauma**

The two Australian Church Responses (*Towards Healing* and *The Melbourne Response*) have been in place for 21 years. Whilst there were many positive accomplishments in their work,

they have failed in many unfortunate ways as the work of the Royal Commission and its Report have highlighted. It is now timely that they adopt a broader vision with a set of strategies building on the past work of Church agencies such as the Professional Standards Office and CareLink and extending it. The recently established Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, whilst a very worthwhile initiative, does not seem to have healing strategies within its terms of reference because of its focus on child safety and ethical professionalism.

A response that must be carefully considered is to have a set of strategies totally outside the control of episcopal authorities as in the Irish context, freestanding and independent. The suggested gospel theme would be *Restoring the Face of God*, taking the cue from Mw 18, 10 – 11 when Jesus said, *See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven*¹, immediately after the passage about ‘the millstone around their necks’.

(c) To work with priests, parish pastoral associates and religious order personnel, both male and female, in increasing their knowledge and skills in implementing a restorative healing approach and a child protection strategy applicable right across the Church, its educational and human service organizations and its parishes

If a mechanism has been designed and put in place to assist and support priests in various dioceses, information about these strategies actually being implemented has only come to the attention of *For the Innocents* in too few dioceses. This facet needs to be expanded as part of a policy and program for a restorative healing approach and the implementation of a child protection regime now being mandated by governments. While the very necessary 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission looks to the future, there are few indicators about addressing the hurt and confusion from the past for the abused, their families, whistleblowers and the laity.

A particular element of this objective must be the identification of priority parishes and the implementation of a special strategy. It is to be noted that the various Catholic Education Offices have been very active in implementing a child protection program within their student welfare missions within schools, and Catholic schools are now very safe places.

(d) To implement all the 21 recommendations of the Royal Commission that apply directly to the Catholic Church as documented in Volume 16, Book Two of the Royal Commission’s Report

A central plank of any healing process must be the full, unqualified implementation of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, including those which require positive responses from the Holy See. Survivors are watching very carefully the quality and extent of the Church’s response, especially to the accountability mechanisms that will be conducted by the proposed National Office of Child Safety over the next five years with a full evaluation in 2028. The key recommendations as outlined in Appendix One must be implemented even in the face of opposition from the Holy See.

¹ The Jerusalem Bible does not use the word, ‘face’ as its translation is “their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven”. This is unfortunate because the Greek text clearly uses the Greek word for face.

The following 22 strategies are suggested, each of which requires an individual action plan:

Strategies

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Diocesan Bishops

1. *To put in place an overall reconciliation process through initiating a direct conversation between church leadership and the advocacy and support organizations in creating greater cohesion in developing and implementing a quality healing strategy across the Australian Church*
2. *To present to the Australian Catholic Church community a detailed plan of action, acknowledging the terrible realities of the past and outlining the healing and redress strategies to be implemented in restoring the face of Jesus, including highlighting the work of the Church's educational, welfare, aged care and advocacy agencies in assisting the primary, secondary and tertiary victims and in rebranding the Church's public image*
3. *To engage with key Catholic social service organizations in developing a coordinated, customized, flexible and quality strategy across each diocese and across Australia*
4. *To implement as soon as possible, as recommended by the Royal Commission, a regular professional development strategy for priests and male and female religious, including religious leaders, with compulsory components regarding professional responsibility and boundaries, ethical professionalism in ministry and in child safety as well as mandatory professional/pastoral supervision and regular performance appraisals*
5. *To ensure as soon as possible, as recommended by the Royal Commission, that male and female candidates for religious ministry and pastoral service undertake training on (i) the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards (ii) professional responsibility and boundaries, ethical professionalism in religious ministry and child safety (iii) policies regarding appropriate responses to allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse and how to implement these policies (iv) how to work with children, including an understanding of childhood development and (v) identifying and understanding the nature, indicators and impacts of child sexual abuse*
6. *To design and implement in every diocese and religious order an extended induction program for newly-arrived, overseas-trained religious personnel that incorporates external professional screening, initial training in child safety and material covering (i) the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards (ii) professional responsibility and boundaries, ethical professionalism in religious ministry and child safety (iii) policies regarding appropriate responses to allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse and how to implement these policies (iv) how to work with children, including an understanding of childhood development and (v) identifying and understanding the nature, indicators and impacts of child sexual abuse*

Diocesan Initiatives

7. *To propose the appointment of two full-time chaplains, female and male, for CCSA survivors within the chaplaincy framework of Catholic social services in each diocese*
8. *To establish a CCSA survivors' planning group to lead and organize healing activities in association with the CCSA chaplains over the medium- and long-term in each diocese*
9. *To develop a core group of approved professionals with various specializations in CCSA in the implementation of a quality healing strategy in every diocese*
10. *To work with government and community leaders in establishing a Garden of Healing in each capital city, perhaps through public subscription, and in other appropriate locations for the victims of all kinds of sexual abuse of children under 18 whether committed in family or institutional settings*
11. *To have an inbuilt evaluation process in assessing the outcomes of the strategies as well as a more formal independent evaluation process every five years that operates in tandem with the evaluation and accountability processes of the National Office of Child Safety*

Compensation and Redress

12. *To exert pressure as befits our gospel values for a more just and a more generous redress and lifelong compensation system for primary and secondary victims based on European Church models of restorative healing and justice*

Parish Initiatives

13. *To appoint in every parish an accredited child protection officer within a diocesan child protection policy according to world's best practice*
14. *To develop a parish and regional strategy, including the focus on priority parishes where multiple sex abuse occurred, in implementing a restorative healing process, including specific parish-based strategies*

Support Structures at Diocesan and Parish Level

15. *To develop a more systematic network of support groups and an individualized befriending support program for CCSA survivors*
16. *To provide appropriate spiritual guidance and support for CCSA survivors, including liturgical reparation and restitutorial services on appropriate commemorative days and other appropriate initiatives*
17. *To hold an annual contritional Mass, perhaps on the Feast of the Innocents, for the next 15+ years for the abused, their families and the support and advocacy groups*
18. *To put in place supportive self-management mechanisms for support persons, befrienders and other service providers in the context of vicarious trauma*

Communication, Education and Research

- 19. To work with key academic researchers in undertaking research into emerging aspects of child sexual abuse*
- 20. To design and resource a special non-Church website with multiple elements to assist both primary and secondary victims of all types of sexual abuse of children under 18 and to assist policy-makers and program designers*
- 21. To work with the Commonwealth Government in establishing a national memorial for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts (see Rec. 17.6 of the Royal Commission's Report)*
- 22. To share the results of the various diocesan initiatives with other dioceses in Australia and with the Holy See's Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors headed by Cardinal O'Malley on a dedicated resource sharing website*

APPENDIX ONE

KEY ROYAL COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The final Report of the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse contains 17 volumes with 7,323 pages. The three books of Volume 16 are focussed on religious institutions, with Book Two (943 pages) devoted to the Catholic Church. While there are other recommendations focused on technical aspects of Catholic canon law, among the recommendations with the most immediate and obvious implications for the Australian Catholic Church and other religious institutions are the following:

7.4: Laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities should not exempt persons in religious ministry from being required to report knowledge or suspicions formed, in whole or in part, on the basis of information disclosed in or in connection with a religious confession.

16.7: The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and the participation of lay men and women. This review should draw from the approaches of governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies.

16.8: In the interests of child safety and improved institutional response to child sexual abuse, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should request the Holy See to: (a) publish criteria for the selection of bishops, including relating to the promotion of child safety (b) establish a transparent process for appointing bishops which includes the direct participation of lay people

16.18 The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should request the Holy See to consider introducing voluntary celibacy for diocesan clergy

16.19 All Catholic religious institutes in Australia, in consultation with their international leadership and the Holy See as required, should implement measures to address the risks of harm to children and the potential psychological and sexual dysfunction associated with a celibate rule of religious life. This should include consideration of whether and how existing models of religious life could be modified to facilitate alternative forms of association, shorter terms of celibate commitment, and/or voluntary celibacy (where that is consistent with the form of association that has been chosen).

16.20: In order to promote healthy lives for those who choose to be celibate, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and all Catholic religious institutes in Australia should further develop, regularly evaluate and continually improve, their processes for selecting, screening and training of candidates for the clergy and religious life, and their processes of ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious

16.23: In relation to guideline documents for the formation of priests: (a) The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should review and revise the Ratio nationalis institutionis sacerdotalis: Programme for priestly formation (current version December 2015) and all other guideline documents relating to the formation of priests, permanent deacons, and those in pastoral ministry, to explicitly address the issue of child sexual abuse by clergy and best practice in relation to its prevention. (b) All Catholic religious institutes in Australia should review and revise their particular norms and guideline documents relating to the formation of priests, religious brothers and religious

sisters, to explicitly address the issue of child sexual abuse and best practice in relation to its prevention.

16.26: *The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should consult with the Holy See, and make public any advice received, in order to clarify whether: (a) information received from a child during the sacrament of reconciliation that they have been sexually abused is covered by the seal of confession (b) if a person confesses during the sacrament of reconciliation to perpetrating child sexual abuse, absolution can and should be withheld until they report themselves to civil authorities.*

16.48 *Religious institutions which have a rite of religious confession for children should implement a policy that requires the rite only be conducted in an open space within the clear line of sight of another adult. The policy should specify that, if another adult is not available, the rite of religious confession for the child should not be performed.*

16.56: *Any person in religious ministry who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse should: (a) in the case of Catholic priests and religious, be dismissed from the priesthood and/or dispensed from his or her vows as a religious (b) in the case of Anglican clergy, be deposed from holy orders (c) in the case of Uniting Church ministers, have his or her recognition as a minister withdrawn (d) in the case of an ordained person in any other religious denomination that has a concept of ordination, holy orders and/or vows, be dismissed, deposed or otherwise effectively have their religious status removed.*

APPENDIX TWO

APOLOGY – For the Innocents

We are ordinary people who want to apologize to you, the victims, survivors – the innocents – and to your families and friends for the pain, trauma, isolation and unwarranted guilt you may have carried as a result of sexual or other abuse by Catholic clergy, religious teachers or workers. We acknowledge that such abuse has also occurred in other communities.

We who want to say sorry are of many persuasions. Some of us belong to a church, and some do not; some of us are people of faith and some are not; some of us believe in a supreme being and some do not; some of us trained for ministry but did not complete it; some of us were ordained for ministry but now have left; some of us are still in ministry; some of us express no religious belief and have no religious attachments.

But all of us are deeply scandalized by what has been done to you and your families, be it by individuals or organizational structures. We recognize that in the process your beliefs and faith may have been shattered.

Too often, legal and procedural actions take over and the individual's pain and needs, especially for healing, drift out of view. We acknowledge that these crimes were committed in a religious context, which diminishes the message and the worth of those whose aim it is to love one another and show care.

While we are aware of and encourage established groups working to achieve justice in this area, our focus is directed entirely towards victims to become survivors through healing.

It is true that our apology is quite different from any which might be offered by those who have hurt you. But we hope that our apology will be at least one part of the healing you seek and are entitled to.

We recognize that many are affected by the consequences of your experiences. While there are some who have never told anyone, often there are family, friends and colleagues who have come to know what has happened. They too may carry a burden of their own pain and guilt as they judge themselves as having failed to act in some way to protect and support you.

We also acknowledge the many good compassionate priests and ministers, religious and workers in this field. They often feel the wrath and disdain of society, which

should really be directed at the offenders. It is unfair those good people find themselves affected by that and we wish them our support and encouragement. Often they are themselves struggling to assist victims to assist victims to become survivors through healing.

We want this apology to flow to all those who have been affected. It is an awful and unjust burden you have been forced to bear. We acknowledge your suffering. For this we are sorry.

8th August 2012

Feast of St Mary MacKillop

Who called out priestly sexual abuse and was excommunicated as a result.

APPENDIX THREE

PARISH ACTION MODEL

Background

The Victorian Government has responded to the recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry through legislation now being implemented. The Federal Royal Commission into child abuse has completed its work and made its recommendations to the national Parliament. As expected, the terms of reference and conduct of those enquiries provide neither practical nor immediate measures to promote the healing of victims and those indirectly affected as key outcomes.

The overall focus of the Victorian Inquiry was on “practices, policies, protocols of organisations . . .” as specified in the terms of reference. It concerned the mechanisms and relevant legislative and legal arrangements for prevention, intervention and sanction: the welfare or fate of current and previous victims fell outside its scope.

This document prepared in the Victorian context is intended for the use of church leaders at all levels in assisting parish communities, especially priority parishes where much abuse has occurred in the past, in addressing child and adolescent sexual abuse by priests and religious.

Personal Decision

As vitally interested people, we must decide whether to put our energy into Healing or Prevention. Could we successfully promote and support healing while pursuing justice? Such a decision would likely mean that those who were abused would be overlooked despite remaining unhealed. Each of us needs to decide where to focus.

This appendix is an attempt to draw upon processes being used successfully in some Catholic parishes and communities. It draws on the expertise and experience of parish priests with demonstrated long-term knowledge and skill in working with victims and survivors of clerical sexual abuse, combined with the treatment insights of a senior psychologist and colleagues who have treated such people over a long period. It has also benefited from the contributions of those who have experienced this model first hand

How Will We Know When We Have Succeeded?

Clarity of our mission is critical for knowing when or if the objective has been achieved, for determining the simplest and most effective steps to arrive at the objective and for knowing when we are on track or off track. What will success look like? *Perhaps it will be observed when the processes and people engaged in promoting healing generate positive responses from victims and their loved ones during their journey of recovery.*

How Will We Make This Happen?

A. Pastors' Role

Usually, there are individual priests or priests in ‘zones’ who collaborate from time to time and are key leaders of integrity in the community where the crime occurred. Workshops for those pastors would aim to address:

- **How the sexual abuse issue has affected pastors personally, and issues of confidence and knowledge.** This closed session would deal especially with their needs, including their own experiences of angry and ignorant accusations from people who feel betrayed or scandalised and generalise their opprobrium to all priests; it would review the nature of sexual assault and abuse, its impacts and common healing characteristics. It would also offer strategies to assist their own well-being, including responses to anger. The ideal outcome would be to match the skills and knowledge of the pastors to the tasks of establishing their own community-based program of healing and support for victims and survivors while remaining safe and supported in the process.

B. Pastors' Motivation.

- **This session would explore the reasons for initiating a program in their own community.** It would consider the merits of
 - helping a community become attuned to responding to others in ways that are more likely to promote healing and
 - developing a sustainable shared positive belief about themselves and the world despite these horrendous criminal acts.

C. Pastors' Scope

- **The final session would define the scope of the pastoral response to victims and survivors of each degree:** primary (directly assaulted), secondary (usually family) and tertiary (usually fellow community members who might also feel betrayed and whistleblowers) with emphasis on effective help. How to help effectively is vital: one consideration being to avoid 'rescue' where the victim-rescuer-persecutor cycle establishes. This element would include work on ensuring help is given by mutual consent; that both people take on half of the effort to improve the situation which helps the victim take ownership of his or her own healing and avoids feelings of being patronised; and understanding the dynamics of 'helplessness'. The objective is to become clear about the limits of personal responsibility for initiating and assisting the healing process, along with the extent of responsibility that a local team and pastor might have or be given.

D. Pastors' Contribution

- **Resolve the role of the pastor or pastors when attending a local meeting for this purpose.** Explore their own expectations of the pastor's role at the meeting, and those of the attendees. Develop strategies to preside or conduct or merely attend together with the implications of each on the local team's performance.

Once the pastor leadership group has substantially completed those sessions, programs for parishes and community members can begin. The process in each case would be similar to that of the pastors themselves, modified for local circumstances.

Identify and train local leaders in a model process that they can use, adjust and pass on.

- **SELECT** a local team to establish and run a process to promote healing in the wake of the clerical sexual abuse scandal. The skills and knowledge needed in the team, together with selection processes and criteria should be thought about in advance.
- **EDUCATE** about sexual abuse, its impacts, steps and obstacles to recovery;
- Clarify the purpose of responding - and **IDENTIFY** the need, its importance, the consequences if we don't act; then match those needs to the available skills and knowledge of the local team;
- **EMPOWER** the local team by teaching it how to support itself or attendees and building confidence in working with difficult issues. Include the talents of others; reinforce the value of an external facilitator and support team rather than the pastor himself, thus freeing him to be available and contribute as appropriate. Unless there is knowledge and skill transfer of 'know how', confusion and no action will result. Identify any real or perceived obstacles and deal with them.
- Include **RESPONSIBILITY** that is already a part of your role or because you have a special talent that could be very useful here. If we don't act, who will?

First Parish Letter: Intention To Gather Parishioners

This is a personal letter from the pastor to the people. It should openly acknowledge the facts and own feelings, and must avoid defensiveness. There will be responses to the letter including anonymous replies, anger – “it’s too late now!”, “where were you when . . .?” and more. But those authors will observe carefully. Review a process for putting out the news to the public – we are poor at that – often we are seen as a “Wall of Silence” and no visible response to the victims is seen to mean “you don’t care”.

The overarching plan at the start is that ultimately we offer to meet victims and survivors to learn from them how we might be supportive in a genuine way and not be seen as another problem.

Team Members To Speak At Masses On A Selected Sunday

This is an important symbol of the laity’s willingness to respond actively to care for its community. As in the context of family, those who are hurting look to family members to provide care and support, though it is vital to understand that victims are highly unlikely to attend initial gatherings, if at all. Any who do so will most likely not have disclosed their suffering either in that context or to many other people, if any. Ensure a consistent message is presented each time. Have a message in common with each other – and Stick To It! For example, do not stray into prevention issues, conduct of the hierarchy or similar issues not directly related to the healing of victims and survivors.

Parish Meeting

In the course of the meeting, (and in prior publicity) shut down sabotage by other agendas, (e.g. married clergy, female priests, organisational failures, etc) by specifying a clear single objective. Maintain respect for the Victims by keeping the focus solely on healing for them. Adopt the test: *is what I’m saying, doing or hearing more likely or less likely to assist healing and recovery?*

Parishioners are to be invited to become more informed, to clarify their understandings, to make suggestions for productive action, to unite in a cooperative venture for healing, to provide direction

and feedback especially from victims willing to talk about methods that might make treatment more approachable.

Involve experienced group facilitators for small groups – perhaps local teachers, if briefed that their role is more about ‘classroom control’ than agenda setting apart from discouraging distracting issues. While clarifying the problem is necessary, the main objective here is to focus on healing while preventing this from being just a venting session and to focus on being part of the solution.

The facilitator will emphasise that the meeting is an opportunity for people from Primary Victim to Bishop, to tell their stories and be heard and believed. Perhaps there is someone here who has a relative impacted or a friend who has been affected etc. i.e. “salting” the commonalties. Allow all to speak safely and unhindered. Confidentiality is vital! Start the meeting with a request to maintain confidentiality and an example of harm done when breached.

This meeting may be a therapeutic experience for many present.

Attention might be focused on:

- Personal impact of the abuse including tertiary victims e.g. school staff, baby sitters, etc;
- Areas for appropriate action; consider short and long term results. Be sensitive to the situation of those abused who may be present and undisclosed.

It is ESSENTIAL to record and compile the summary outcomes of the meeting - especially commitments to action - before it closes.

A Formal or Ceremonial Apology

This might include Visual, Auditory, Touch, Sensation, Smell, and Taste components for a more effective impact; compare this with the Bishop’s letter, often presented in its written form only.

Brainstorm suggestions: e.g. Panel of Speakers. Victim Speakers. A Contritional Mass. In Ireland, a washing of feet. Something similar to the White Balloon Day?

“Where the hands of sorrow and repentance are genuinely extended towards the hands of pain and possible forgiveness”. A Eucharistic Model using conventional terms. Caution needed in the use of religious terminology and symbols.

Confess our shock, disbelief, initial reaction, confusion, and lack of action. A victim’s story told by a victim prepared to do so. Present a reading of the FTI ‘Apology’ or other brief and relevant readings. The St Francis Prayer, “make me an instrument of your peace ...” Sharing a sign of peace. Perhaps provide food or refreshments. Consider this paragraph carefully in your context as it may be too challenging for some of the people who have been abused.

Furthermore, for those not already freed, we declare our determination to support and celebrate with them in the attaining of their freedom in whatever way it comes.

Follow-through via visible supportive action; avoid a talk fest.

Assist other Parishes based on our own experience.

Template of an Initial Letter to Parishioners from the Parish Priest

Dear Parishioners,

It is with great pain and anguish that I write as your pastor, to respond to the current inquiries and legal actions about clerical sexual assault. We acknowledge that these criminal acts have indeed occurred. We are also grateful that some perpetrators have been prosecuted and prison sentences determined. Others of course have died and unfortunately will never face their victims in a court of law to be brought to account for the damage they have done.

As a church community, we express our sincere regret and sorrow to all victims, especially to any of our own young ones or people who may have been victims, and we deeply grieve the hurt and pain that has been caused.

I know that there are many parishioners who like me were deeply shocked and confused that some of those who were ordained to preach the message of the gospel, instead engaged our young ones with subtlety or fear, in deeds that he himself clearly and publicly condemned. In our confusion we lacked direction about what to do with such wounds but now we wish to take action that may lead to the healing of those abused. Where the response of Church authorities was perceived not to have been adequate, we express regret and sorrow. When trust is also broken by church leadership, we all feel betrayed and outraged.

It is important that the truth be pursued and not covered up, and that legal processes are brought to completion. We believe that the Victorian and New South Wales parliamentary inquiries, The Royal Commission, action taken by victims' groups and their supporters and responsible procedures identified and installed within the church that is supervised by an auditing body will ensure that intervention and prevention procedures will be rightfully put in place.

Our purpose here and now is to offer to victims, and all those affected, especially their families, our acknowledgment and support, along with opportunities for healing as may be needed. The way forward is one of hope. It is a crucial time for each of us to build a climate of trust, support and healing in our parish community.

By way of a parish response, we invite you to gather as a community in order to address the effects of these events. The opportunity for this healing and reconciliation will be offered at a Parish Gathering to be held at [Name]. This Parish Gathering will be facilitated by specially trained personnel who are experienced in such work. People will be invited to share with each other in small groups, will be given information about resources available, and will be encouraged to be part of the healing process. Details of the Parish Gathering are yet to be finalized. We will inform you by another mailing within a few days.

Should any people wish to approach Fr X or me in order to share their story, we would welcome such a meeting.

Our Parish Pastoral Council has recommended and endorsed this gathering. I trust that such an initiative will be a positive step, enabling us to move forward with renewed faith and trust in God and in each other towards recovery.

Yours sincerely . . .

APPENDIX FOUR

THE NOTION OF SAFETY

The foundational notion of safety is key, incorporating the personal, interpersonal, environmental and systemic dimensions:

- (a) **Personal safety:** this implies predicting, understanding and modifying responses and behaviours in making the interactions personalized
- (b) **Interpersonal safety:** this implies a climate where the interactants can be trusted with confidentiality and transparency, paraphrasing conversation and checking and mutually negotiated boundaries
- (c) **Environmental safety:** the building and room surrounds are free from harm with suitable spaces, no triggering symbols or pictures and appropriate storage of information
- (d) **Systemic safety:** this implies access to just, transparent and fair processes with ongoing feedback

A trauma-informed strategy also implies attention to the possible vicarious trauma of staff with attention to self-management and organizational support. However, recent research would question a trauma-informed strategy as overly narrow and its central focus of continual memory activation is questionable in many cases. Vilencia, Shakespeare-Finch and Obst (2014) would argue for a broader approach, insisting on the key therapeutic role of the counsellors and their experience in assisting CCSA survivors. See also Bohm et al. (2014) with special relevance to the Catholic Church.

List of References:

Bohm, B., Zollner, H., Fegert, J. & Liebhardt, H. (2014) Child sexual abuse in the context of the Roman Catholic Church: A Review of the Literature from 1981 – 2013 **Journal of Child Sexual Abuse** 23, 6, 635 – 656.

Vilencia, S., Shakespeare-Finch, J. & Obst, P. (2014) What aspects of counselling facilitate healing from childhood sexual assault for men and women? A phenomenological investigation. **Psychotherapy in Australia** 20, 4, 12- 21.