



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

"Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"And whoever receives one such little child for my sake, receives me. But whosoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals! For it must needs be that scandals come, but woe to the man through whom scandal does come!

"....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. For the Son of Man came to save what was lost."

Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 18, verses 2 - 7, 10 - 11.

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For the Innocents
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Introduction

1. The victim survivors 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. This strategy is directed towards the healing of their spiritual, psychological and physical scars that have resulted from crimes committed against them, even many decades ago, by church personnel, mainly priests and male religious brothers. The Victoria Police evidence covering the experience of 509 survivors since 1956 suggests that the average period for disclosure is 23 years with many not disclosing until their fifties, or sixties or even older. In its survey of the situation in the Sydney archdiocese, the Royal Commission produced evidence that 5.5 per cent of its priests had had credible allegations made against them. The equivalent U.S.A. figure for the whole of the country has risen from the original statistical figure of 4.0 per cent in 2002 to 5.9 per cent in 2013.

2. This strategy has been developed for consideration by the Catholic dioceses and eparchies of Australia, including for Melbourne, Oceania's largest diocese and one of the largest in the Asia-Pacific region, from where this initiative emanates. It has been developed by the support group called *For the Innocents* which is comprised of innocent victims, 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 previous decades - many are trained professionals in psychology, social work and associated disciplines as well as in Catholic theology. Also in Australia and across the world, women in particular have played a leading role in supporting victims, in leading advocacy organizations and in doing the necessary research.

3. The word 'survivors' is increasingly used to describe victims of CCSA though the word is not used in Jewish circles because of its use in relation to the Holocaust. Another term now commonly in use is simply 'the abused'. All these terms will be used interchangeably in this document.

4. Another technicality arises in 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 to female religious since the cases of female religious abusers have been quite rare. Another alternative would be 'male religious' and this will be used on occasions as appropriate.

5. This document has been developed by *For the Innocents* based on (i) the findings of the Victorian and NSW parliamentary findings and the preliminary outcomes of the Royal Commission (ii) the various research studies from across the world (iii) our knowledge of the Church, its structure and mission and, most importantly, (iv) the input from the abused themselves.

The Current CCSA Context

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

- The 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 that moves beyond *The Towards Healing Response* and *The Melbourne Response* and the associated work of CareLink since 1996
- The continuing difficulties that episcopal leadership faces to address the restorative healing issue through a coordinated and responsive strategy
- 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 the Royal Commission and invariably many years later, who are still in pain
- 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 had been treated by Church authorities, leading often to re-traumatization and to a loss of faith and of trust in the organization - many victims and whistleblowers describe this as the second abuse perpetrated on them
- The lack of full recognition 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, as one example, into the CareLink agency of the Melbourne archdiocese
- The limited capacity of diocesan priests to respond to the CCSA crisis and to give local leadership notwithstanding the availability of support personnel in some dioceses
- The limited capacity of priority parishes (where much abuse occurred, in some cases, by serial criminals) 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 Church's response was so inadequate

- The completion of both the Victorian and New South Wales Parliamentary Inquiries and the five Case Study (nos. 4, 6, 8, 11 & 14) reports of the Royal Commission up till February 2015 with a total of 120 findings and 22 systemic issues and the consequent feeling that it would be timely to implement new initiatives in looking to the future

7. 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 but also taking into account the needs of priests and other religious personnel and local Catholic communities generally, especially in priority parishes where much abuse took place, sometimes over several decades (see Appendix One for a model of what might be done in parishes). The strategy model aims to build on, expand and to re-envision any current diocesan strategies if they happen to be in place. The For the Innocents model of a sound community-based response to CCSA forms the central part of this document. How key Catholic agencies could contribute to an overall strategy needs to be explored.

8. Another element is the ripple effect of abuse impacting upon secondary and tertiary victims, including priests and parishioners who may, among many other feelings, have deep residual guilt for not having prevented the abuse or not having read incipient signs with greater perceptiveness.

CCSA Support Organizations

9. The support situation is quite varied across Australia. In the Archdiocese of Melbourne, for example, five organizations are known to work currently in the area of assisting CCSA survivors but there may be others. There have been other organizations across Australia which have worked in advocating for victims and their families. 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

10. The Royal Commission has 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 must 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 been demonstrated to have a healing impact.

11. 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 responses can either be characterized by emotional reactivity, disorganization, chaos and heightened sensations or by 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. Understanding of the long-term effects of PTSD and complex PTSD is now much better appreciated in the broader community.

12. 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, in confronting a situation where there is much PTSD, organizations like the Church need to develop healing strategies that incorporate the five dimensions of (i) safety, (ii) trustworthiness, (iii) collaboration, (iv) choice and (v) empowerment - 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 Two)

Developing an Overall Mission

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

- (a) To create in the spirit of Christian dialogue and trust a path of reconciliation between the Australian diocesan and eparchy leadership and the various advocacy and support groups in (i) acknowledging in a reparational way how the past is to be acknowledged (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 seem to have had difficulty in grasping the extent of the problem and were badly hampered by the Vatican and canon law and by some highly questionable legal and insurance advice, as was seen in the evidence given in the parliamentary inquiries and to the Royal Commission.

Now is the time for the Church to move on with a new vision of healing. 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 uniting together to assist the primary and secondary victims in the years ahead. There needs to be developed both a common mission and a set of strategies in an environment of faith. The process of creating healing and cohesion in working together will need to be conducted in a spirit of dialogue facilitated by recognized experts in dialogue and good will and who have knowledge of the Church and its culture.

(b) To re-imagine completely a multifaceted response, perhaps totally outside the official umbrella of the Church by renaming and reframing previous responses and built around a selected theological or gospel theme and addressing, in a pastoral rather than a legal way, the areas of compensation and redress as well as 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 have been in place for 19 years. Whilst it can be claimed that there were positive accomplishments in their work and protocols, they have failed in many unfortunate ways as the work of the Royal Commission and its current five reports have highlighted. It is now timely that these approaches 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. It is suggested that any response be carefully considered and have a set of strategies outside the control of Episcopal authorities which, in the Irish context, is freestanding and independent. The suggested gospel theme would be ***Restoring the Face of Jesus***, taking the cue from Mw 18, 10 - 11 ***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***, immediately after the passage about 'the millstone around their necks'. In this way, a whole-of-community approach contributes to the healing process whereby positive and personal participation can be taken by all at every level of a diocese.

- (c) To work to establish a-whole-of-community approach with priests, parish pastoral associates and religious order personnel, both male and female, through increasing their knowledge and skills and working as a team with the laity in implementing a restorative healing approach and a child protection mechanism applicable right across the Church, its educational and human service organizations and its parishes**

A mechanism has been put in place to assist and support priests in various dioceses but information about strategies in such dioceses has not come to the attention of *For the Innocents* except in one diocese. This 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. A particular element of this objective must be the identification of priority parishes where much abuse has occurred and the implementation of a specific 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.

Strategies

The following 18 strategies are suggested, each of which would require an action plan.

Diocesan Hierarchy:

- 1. To initiate a 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***

Diocesan Structures:

- 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 establish CCSA survivors' resource centres, planned in conjunction with survivors, to facilitate healing activities in association with the chaplains (cf. 14) over the medium- and long-term in each diocese**

- 5. To develop a pool of approved professionals with specializations to be deployed in facilitating the healing of victims of CCSA who would contribute to the design and implementation of quality healing strategies**

- 6. To work with government and community leaders in establishing a Garden of Healing in each capital city, perhaps through public subscription, for the victims of all kinds of child and teenage sexual abuse whether committed in family or institutional settings based on a USA archdiocesan model**

- 7. 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**

Compensation and Redress:

- 8. To exert pressure for a more just and a more generous redress and compensation system for primary and secondary victims based on European Church models of restorative healing and justice**

Parish Requirements:

- 9. To develop a parish and regional strategy, including the focus on parishes where multiple sex abuse occurred, in implementing a restorative healing process, including special parish-based strategies***

- 10. To appoint in every parish an accredited and trained child protection officer operating within a diocesan child protection policy designed according to world's best practice***

Communication, Education and Research:

- 11. To design and resource a special non-Church website with multiple elements to assist both primary and secondary victims of all types of child and teenage sexual abuse that would assist with providing education and communicational facilities and would assist policy-makers and programs designers***

- 12. To work with key academic researchers in undertaking research into emerging aspects of child sexual abuse and how life long healing is best achieved***

- 13. To share the results of the various diocesan initiatives with other dioceses in Australia and with the Vatican special committee headed by Cardinal O'Malley on a dedicated resource sharing website***

Support Structures at Diocesan and Parish Levels:

- 14. To propose the appointment of two qualified and knowledgeable full-time chaplains, female and male, for CCSA survivors within the chaplaincy framework of Catholic social services in each diocese***

- 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 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 training in self-management mechanisms and coping strategies for support persons, befrienders and other service providers in the context of vicarious trauma**

APPENDIX ONE

PARISH ACTION MODEL

Background

The Victorian Government has responded to the recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry. The Federal Royal Commission into child abuse will result in 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, influenced by the Victorian context, is intended for the use of church leaders at all levels in assisting parish communities, especially parishes where significantly more 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 document 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've 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 crimes 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 and whistleblowers who might also feel betrayed) 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 feeling 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 and 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.

E. Selection of and Training Local Leadership

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. In this brief address, the purpose is to promote a parish meeting, not in any way to educate congregations. 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 too 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 promoting a meeting about 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 *For the Innocents* '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 TWO

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.

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