

1 August 2003

The Secretary
Community Affairs Committee,
The Senate
Parliament House,
CANBERRA
ACT 2600



Dear Madam/Sir,

Re: Child Sexual/Physical/Emotional Abuse by Catholic Church.

I have been advised by Chris McIsaac that your Committee is inquiring into these matters. I am unable to at this short notice enclose a lengthy document, however I am sending:

- A copy of 'The Age' article from 1994.
- A copy of my police statement of 2002.
- A copy of a letter to Simon Crean 2002.

There are a number of other statements that I have given to the Towards Healing program and to the Independent Assessors appointed by the TW process – these include a Canon/Civil lawyer and two retired investigations officers from the Victorian police.

Unfortunately the perpetrator in my case is deceased and so the Police cannot lay criminal charges, however there has been continued denial and covering up of the events that were known to the Order in 1966-1970, to this day.

I have met with treatment by the Order that shows no hint of any Christian principles but rather stonewalling and continued denials, each of which is just like further abuse. They appear to deal with more as a business than a religious Order.

I believe that as the Towards Healing Process instituted by George Pell is an in-house process there is little hope of justice or fairplay. For example S 40.4.2 states:

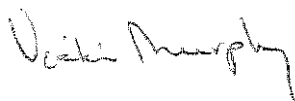
-“ An accused person may be invited to admit to an offense but is not bound to do so, nor may an oath be administered”.

It is high time that there was an independent inquiry to open up the whole issue, because until it is all brought out into the light, the culture and attitudes that still deny and belittle those who were abused continues. The fact that those who are still alive and knew of the abuse at that time can still pretend they know nothing and have the support of their Orders in doing, so means that there has been no change in attitudes. This suggests that any more recent victims would equally be stonewalled and swept under the carpet.

The abuses that occurred continue to affect me/us the victims and have had immense effects on my/our lives, but it also affects all our families and our children. For example, my family simply did not want to know when I told them and basically cut off family relations with me. This then has massive effects on my family. And so the damage is continued and perpetuated.

PLEASE CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY/ROYAL COMMISSION
TO STOP THE CYCLE OF ABUSE THAT STILL AFFECTS THE LIVES OF
THOUSANDS OF AUSTRALIANS TODAY.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Murphy".

Vicki Murphy.



4 June 2002

Dear Vicki

Find attached the article as requested. I have debited your credit card to the amount of \$11.00 for the service.

Your receipt number is 200732.

If I can be of further assistance please give me a call.

Yours sincerely

Helen Barnett
Reader Services
Phone: (03) 9604 1148, Fax: (03) 9601 3161

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Sacha -

Rosemary WEST.

Students accuse nuns of sexual abuse

Byline: ROSEMARY WEST

Two former Catholic school students have alleged nuns sexually abused them in a Melbourne college and a South Australian convent.

Two former Catholic school students have alleged nuns sexually abused them in a Melbourne college and a South Australian convent.

The former students made the allegations to a telephone help-line run by Broken Rites, a mutual support and advocacy group for victims of abuse.

A former student at Genazzano College in Kew told the help-line that she was sexually abused by a nun at the school in 1966.

Ms Chris Wilding, the convenor of Broken Rites, said it was the second report she had received of sexual abuse in Catholic convents.

The second woman alleged she was sexually abused at the age of 14 by two older girls in the presence of a nun in Le Pines Home of Compassion, more than 30 years ago. The home was a Catholic girls home run by the Good Shepherd Sisters in South Australia.

Ms Wilding said there was evidence the alleged perpetrators in the two cases may have abused others.

Ms Wilding said the former student told her she had been abused almost every day by a teaching nun in the classroom after school. The nun, who is now dead, would digitally rape her and then beat her with the blackboard ruler.

Then the nun would ring the girls' parents and tell them she had been kept in for bad behavior and she would be punished again when she got home.

At the end of the year, the girl told her father of the abuse and pleaded to be allowed to go to the high school. But he did not believe her, and said it would break her mother's heart if she left Genazzano.

Two years later the girl's father told her another girl had made a similar report and that he now believed her. The nun had been moved to another school where she was made principal and had contracted stomach cancer.

Sr Maryrose Dennehy, the provincial of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, which runs Genazzano and a former principal and deputy principal of the school said she was "shocked and surprised" to hear of allegations against nuns. She had taught with the nun in question at the time and had heard of no allegations of sexual abuse against her.

She appealed to the woman making the allegation to come forward and said she would listen to her and do her best to offer whatever help she could. She did not know whether she could investigate the allegation as both the nun in question and the principal at the time have died.

She said she had never heard any allegations of sexual abuse by nuns, though she had heard of five or six allegations of sisters striking children over the 20 years of her involvement with the school. "Even then (in the 1960s) that was not considered acceptable," she said.

Ms Wilding said the help line had received many other reports from women of cruelty and non-sexual abuse in Catholic schools in the 1950s and 1960s.

Caption: Photo

September 6, 2002

The HONORABLE SIMON CREAM
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA

Dear Simon,

Re: Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Cases.

I am writing to you as I know you are an honorable and honest person of integrity whom I trust will treat this matter with the utmost sincerity.

By way of jogging your memory:-

I knew you from the days of Oct.-Nov. 1975 in the Albert/Middle Park Branch of the ALP – you were Secretary and Bunna Walsh was President. I subsequently organised “Welfare Workers for labour” after 11.11.75. Through the 1970’s and into the 1980’s I was State councillor and Executive member for Victorian branch of the ASWU [Aust. Social Welfare Union] and simultaneously federal treasurer, while we pursued a National award for welfare workers, involving work with MWU and PSA. I worked with Meredith Sussex, John Howe and Pauline Toner on the Victorian health and Welfare Policy Committee and was State conference delegate for Melbourne Ports for many years. [I was SL and you were centre]

In one instance you and Professor Waller represented the employers [CIT/Swinburne] and Laurie Bebbington and I the worker – Jenny McLean [previously Save our Sons] – for wrongful dismissal.

When the Melbourne City Council was sacked and Administrators appointed I was secretary of Melbourne Voters Action Group and worked with Winsome McCaughey to constantly place the views of the residents before the administrators – generally try to keep them honest.

I subsequently held an advisory/consultative position on Migrant and Ethnic communities submissions to the EIP under Jim Kennan – later the federal REDs Program.

Around 1982-3 severe physical health problems led to my withdrawal from most of these activities. I moved to NSW and have since led a reclusive life in the bush.

At the root of these health problems was an issue I eventually had to address. I was severely physically, emotionally, sexually and psychologically abused at school

throughout 1966 by a nun. I attach a copy of an article that appeared in "The Age" 11.2.1994.

The Catholic Church has a process in place that has received a lot of publicity lately. I have personally attempted to confront the institution that abused me and received continued denials. As the nun who abused me is dead I have no recourse via Police. I am unable to afford litigation proceedings and cannot find satisfactory avenues for resolution/representation at this stage. The Towards Healing process is an in house arrangement is therefore open to bias and manipulation. It's a bit like your union representative and the adjudicator being employed by the employer. If I were to say to you that I was raped by the man down the road, you would not say – "Gee that's awful. But look I know his lawyer and he's a nice bloke. Why don't you have a talk to him about it". But that's what's happening.

I believe the time has come for a truly "INDEPENDENT" inquiry to be established into the abuses that occurred.

While there continues to be denial and silence those who do this simply perpetuate the abuse and do nothing to create an environment that discourages further abuse, nor to encourage victims to feel safe to speak out.

I understand that the Police have hundreds of cases contacting them during the current publicity. I do not feel confident that the Church's process will force the Church to acknowledge what has occurred, nor take adequate steps to prevent it, and educate people how to effectively deal with it, so that continued abuse is confronted and stopped. My case also illustrates the fact that blind faith by parents can become part of the abuse, therefore a full program of education and an explicitly independent process is required to assist parents with identifying, addressing, and dealing with the abuse. The government spends millions on chasing paedophile rings, the ICAC identified and dealt with paedophiles in the Police Force, the Defence Forces stopped the world to say "Enough is enough and we will not tolerate any more", but the Catholic Church is allowed to continue it's own in house cover up and continued denials.

I request that you call for the establishment of a Federal Police inquiry and/or ICAC type inquiry, that will ensure fully independent assessment and decisions/judgements on cases. The Catholic Church is wealthy and has in it's ranks many powerful legal minds so there needs to be a level playing field that enables ordinary people who suffered horrific abuse to put their case equally. There would be costs. But it is unsatisfactory that the Church is allowed to privately adjudicate so many matters of deplorable abuse against students and minors in their care, and keep it under raps.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and feel free to contact me. I believe it is essential that some independent inquiry confront this issue and prevent further abuses. I would be happy/keen to discuss the broader issues with you.

Yours sincerely

[Apologies.... my black cartridge is not printing legibly.]

Vicki Anush