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7 September 2002

Reverend L J Matthys  
Bishop of Armidale  
PO Box 93  
Armidale NSW 2350

Bishop Matthys,

Thankyou for meeting and allowing me the opportunity to tell my story and to give you somewhat of a small glimpse of the horrific nature of the abuse that I suffered, for so long as a young boy, by your former Catholic Priest John Farrell.

Obviously discussing what happened to me and trying to put into words the grave impact that it has had on my life is incredibly difficult and very emotional for both me and my family, and I just hope that somehow during our meeting you were able to gain a small understanding of what I have had to deal with over the past 20 years and still continue to deal with on a daily basis.

As you requested, I have outlined what I am looking for, by way of assistance or restitution from the Catholic Church for the pain and suffering that I experienced as a young boy and will continue to endure as a result of such incomprehensible acts by a paedophile Catholic Priest.

1) I have considered, at length, the option of professional counselling, which I am coming to believe may be able to assist in some way, with dealing with this devastating situation.

I note your offer, at our meeting, to support this for both me and my family and I would like to have this offer confirmed and to cover a professional of my choice and at a time into the future, of my choosing.

2) As I explained during our meeting, I truly believe and know that no amount of money can possibly adequately compensate me or my family for the shocking and painful sexual abuse that took place or how my life has been profoundly impacted and will continue to be into the future, as a result.

However, I believe that financial recompense is the only means for the Catholic Church, as an organization, to take responsibility for the sickening actions of their priest who, because of this position, was provided many liberties in society such as access to schools, children and entry to people's lives and homes.

As such I seek a compensation payment to myself, from the Catholic Church, of \$500,000.

Whilst this amount of money does not even begin to "compensate" for the daily anguish, fear and pain I have suffered and will continue to suffer, I feel this sum is "reasonable" to reflect:

- the Catholic Church taking moral responsibility for the 3 years of sustained and horrendous sexual abuse that occurred to me, starting when I was a 9 year old boy, by a Catholic parish priest and for the profound impact of that abuse that I have lived with now for 20 years and will continue to live with for the rest of my life.

- the Church's acknowledgement and apology, to me and my family, for the disgraceful way the circumstances were handled, by the Church, at the time the abuse was reported and ever since. An apology and long overdue responsibility for never, in any fashion, offering my family or myself any form of support, assistance or help for what their employee, who wore the Catholic "badge", had inflicted on us.

- the complete neglect of Duty of Care by the Catholic School System and the staff of St Philomena's Catholic Primary School on countless occasions when I was taken from the school grounds, by Father John Farrell, during school hours, into the Catholic presbytery for the abuse to occur.

3) The last thing I ask for is the commitment of the Catholic Church to be far more proactive in assisting other victims, who have suffered as a result of the evil actions of personnel of the church and who you have firm knowledge of, who perhaps don't have the courage or strength to come forward. The church does have a moral responsibility to offer help to these people to deal with such incredibly sad and painful experiences, which can so easily consume a victim's life.

Since our meeting and following your own request to do so, I have again given enormous thought to taking this matter to the police to pursue John Farrell. I truly feel sickened to the pit of my stomach to know that this evil person, who inflicted so much hurt on me, is continuing to live his life without punishment or restriction. However, I still do not feel confident that the safety of my family or myself will not be jeopardised and I have chosen not to report to the police, at this time. I have no doubt this will be a decision that I will continue to wrestle with daily and I appreciate your indication that should I wish to pursue this in the future, I would have the support of yourself and the Catholic Church.

Again, I thank you for meeting with me and I appreciate the personal concern and regret that you expressed to both my mother and myself. I sincerely hope the same concern, regret & responsibility is shown by the Catholic Church, as an organization.

I await your further correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

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