



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Statement from Catholic Church regarding Four Corners' "Unholy Silence" Media Release 3 July, 2012

All Catholics feel shame at the sexual abuse of children by clergy and others.

The loss of childhood innocence and the broken lives that flow from this evil have evoked broad community revulsion and a determination that such criminal abuse of the young has to be stopped.

Since the advent of Towards Healing in December 1996, the Australian Catholic Church has committed itself publicly to a more victim-centred response when evil of this nature became known.

In the years since, the Church's new intentions have not always been in evidence.

There have been many victims of sexual abuse within the Church who knew that criminal or civil proceedings were not possible or desirable.

Some victims have found that Towards Healing has been a means by which the truth of their story was vindicated.

Apologies and efforts made to express sorrow have helped such victims to find some peace and well-being.

The coming Victorian Inquiry, welcomed by the Archbishop of Melbourne, will no doubt examine some of the tragic stories aired on Four Corners.

The Catholic Church encourages victims of child sexual abuse to go to the police and it stands ready to meet with victims.

For more information about Towards Healing and the Catholic Church's response, please contact Fr Tim Brennan or Sr Angela Ryan on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] arrange media interviews, please contact Beth Doherty on media@catholic.org.au