

MEDIA STATEMENT – 4 CORNERS

This is my response to media inquiries following upon the 4 Corners programme “Unholy Silence”.

Unfortunately due to commitments in the United States I have not been able to respond in a more timely way until my return today.

There have been a number of media statements concerning the meeting Mgr Usher, Mgr Peters and I had with Fr F.

This is the full text of my email response to the inquiry made to me by 4 Corners:

[Name] had been arrested and charged but the court dismissed the charge. There were subsequent rumours about his behaviour and his bishop had suspended him and wanted us to interview him to see if he should be allowed public ministry. We interviewed him and although he was not specific with respect to any admissions we formed a view that he should not be allowed public ministry. That advice was taken by his bishop and he was not given any ministry after that.

My recollection of the meeting some 20 years ago is that in acknowledging wrongdoing Fr F did not name any victims. No victims are named in Monsignor Peters' letter. I did not consider at that time that reporting to the police would assist in any prosecution since we did not have any details of victims. He was already known to the police and had been the subject of police investigation and had been charged.

Fortunately today there are now protocols with the NSW Police where information such as this can be shared for intelligence gathering purposes without the need for identified victims. This is especially valuable in cases where a victim does identify to a church authority but explicitly does not want police involvement.

I strongly urge any other alleged victims of the person concerned to come forward. This will be the best way for justice to be done.

Contrary to some media assertions that we did nothing, we recommended to Bishop Manning that the priest be suspended from all ministry.

Since I was a young solicitor engaged in representing child victims of abuse in Sydney children's courts I have been aware of the tragic consequences of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children. It is completely contrary to my values to ever allow a known offender to be in a position of trust with children or to interfere with the processes of justice.

Fr Brian Lucas
5 July 2012