

MEDIA STATEMENT – 4 CORNERS

I offer this statement in response to many media inquiries I have received concerning 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.

Contrary to some media statements, I have not said that the person in question made no admissions.

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

What is important to understand is that my best recollection of the meeting some 20 years ago is that in acknowledging wrongdoing he was cautious in not incriminating himself by naming any victims.

It is common ground with Monsignor Peters' letter that no names of victims were mentioned. On that basis I did not consider at that time that reporting to the police that would assist in any prosecution.

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 to identify victims. This is especially valuable in cases where a victim does identify to a church authority but explicitly does not want police involvement.

I note that even as at today other alleged victims of the person concerned have not come forward. I strongly urge them to do so. 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. As Mgr Peters' letter notes we did our best to explain that there was no possibility of future ministry as a priest.

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