

## cloistered shame . . .

FROM PAGE 27

with either men or women and his inner turmoil was constant.

"I had no idea sex could be a joyful, pleasurable, even fun and I couldn't discuss it with anyone," he said.

"To this day I will avoid sex if possible, even with my wife."

They have had 10 years of life together and she is a wonderfully understanding woman, although they had a brief period of separation.

He has always found it difficult to get close to other men and most of his friends are women.

Simon never did get to tell his mother of his awful childhood experiences — she died a few years ago. He told his father quite recently but it was a difficult time and his father seemed unable to cope with the revelation.

For many years Simon drove himself relentlessly in his career, working seven days a week.

"I don't know, but maybe becoming a workaholic was a way to escape the memories — to keep busy and forget," he said.

But the pain, guilt and shame didn't go away.

Like many abused people, he finds it hard to explain why he, a complete innocent, should be feeling guilt or shame.

For the past two years, Simon has taken some comfort in therapy in a men's group which meets regularly to talk through their difficulties.

All are victims of abuse or incest.

As for those who abused and bruised the young Simon, one is dead, another is living in retirement interstate but, disturbingly, the first abuser was believed to have been teaching at an interstate Government school until recently.

So why has nothing been done to bring these criminals to justice and what is the Church doing about it?

Simon said he went to the police about his first tormentor and it was while under police investigation the man slipped out of the state.

The legal situation is very complicated but police would love to hear from any other victims of this man.

Simon has met with church leaders in Hobart but prefers not to comment on those talks, except to say he had received great support and sympathy.

Victims of incest and paedophilia are far more likely to come forward these days after much media attention.

It is very different from the 1950s when Simon was so badly abused.

There is another side to the coin with occasional cases of wrongful accusations against teachers, clergy and youth leaders.

This has led to some paranoia among male teachers who are reluctant to touch children even alone with children for fear of allegations and suspicions.

Simon is well aware of this and says it's a price society will have to pay.

"We really need to blow the lid off this, it's been swept under the carpet for too long, and this is not just about me. In the interests of justice we must do something. As for myself, just talking about it is important — until two years ago I suffered in silence and I wonder how many others have done the same."

Simon said he would rather have people uncomfortable about false accusations than having young people abused.

"If these institutions were doing their jobs it wouldn't happen," he said.

## 'Church has Code of Conduct'

THE Anglican Bishop of Tasmania, the Right Reverend Phillip Newell, confirmed he had spoken with Simon about his allegations.

"I have been involved in pastoral conversations with a young man who has made allegations to me which are substantially similar to the ones reported," Bishop Newell said.

"The content of those conversations is strictly confidential and therefore I cannot comment on them."

For similar reasons Bishop Newell is unable to comment on whether he, or other church leaders, may have intervened to influence having the interstate teaching career of the first alleged offender halted.

But Bishop Newell said in the kind of circumstances alluded to, he believed the Church has the responsibility to take appropriate action.

Within the Anglican Church,



Bishop Phillip Newell: the Church has the responsibility to take appropriate action.

it would be usual for all Anglican Bishops in Australia to be informed of the allegation against the priest so that the priest would not hold office again unless or until the matter had been completely cleared," Bishop Newell said.

"The Church is also committed to assisting the authorities in investigating the complaint.

"Should the priest seek employment in an environment with access to children we would be obliged to advise any prospective employer of the

allegation of sexual abuse had been made and not refuted.

"The decision to employ, or not employ, would then rest with them."

Bishop Newell said the Anglican Church is committed to securing from its clergy a commitment to the highest standard of moral and ethical behaviour.

"Where these are breached we seek to investigate quickly and provide appropriate pastoral care and support to anyone who has been offended against," Bishop Newell said.

"In recent years the Church has proclaimed a Code of Conduct for Clergy, a Procedure for responding to Sexual Harassment and is formulating a com-