

Commission into Sexual Abuse
Peter O'Callaghan Q.C.

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Ms. Emma Foster
REDACTED
Oakleigh 3166

20 March 1997

Dear Emma,

I refer to my meeting with you on Monday and as arranged I write to you to confirm what we discussed at that meeting. I am also writing to your parents a more detailed letter dealing with other matters, and I have provided a copy of this letter to them.

My Position

I am an independent commissioner appointed by Archbishop Pell to enquire into and report upon allegations of sexual abuse by (amongst others) priests.

If I am satisfied that sexual abuse has occurred, I will be able to refer the victim of that abuse to Carelink, which will enable the continuance of psychological counselling from a doctor of the victim's choice.

I will also be able to refer that person to the Compensation Panel which has jurisdiction to grant compensation to a maximum of \$50,000.

In order for me to be satisfied that abuse has occurred, typically I interview the victim and obtain from him or her details of the abuse which is said to have taken place. Likewise I seek confirmation of the fact that abuse has occurred, for instance in some cases by referring to statements made by the victim to the police, or looking at other confirmatory matters.

I understood that you do not desire, at least at this stage, to discuss in detail the abuse to which you were subject by Kevin O'Donnell (now deceased). However, you did tell me that you had been abused, and that you had told your psychologist some of the details of that abuse, but not all of it.

You indicated to me that you may be prepared to discuss this matter at some time in the future, but at the present time you do not wish to do so. I easily understand and respect your attitude. In the meantime I confirm my alternative proposal.

You and your parents could authorise me to obtain reports from your psychologist and to discuss your condition with me. In that way, because you have already told me that what you have told the psychologist is true, I would be able to be appropriately informed and satisfied. Naturally, any information I receive would be treated in the strictest confidence, until you and your parents agreed otherwise.

My seeing the reports of the psychologist will also be of assistance in the context of the payments of medical expenses.

I have accordingly enclosed herewith an authorisation which I would request that you and your parents sign, having filled in the name of the psychologist or psychiatrist. Because I apprehend there may be more than one, I have enclosed 3 authorities.

If you have any queries arising out of the above please do not hesitate to contact me or to have your parents do so.

Yours most sincerely,

Peter O'Callaghan Q.C.
Commissioner