

CATHOLIC CHURCH INSURANCES LTD**MARIST BROTHERS, CANBERRA****TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK MONAHAN,
BR CHARLES HOWARD (CH) AND
BR ALEXIS TURTON (AT) ASSISTING BR HOWARD****HELD ON MONDAY 12 MAY 2009****NOTE – INTRODUCTORY COMMENT**

Before this interview, I had a detailed telephone discussion with Br Alexis, who told me that Br Charles is 85 years old and getting to a very confused stage in his life, possibly even the early stages of dementia. Br Alexis has spoken to Br Charles about these issues on a number of occasions, and Br Charles has told Br Alexis that he has one very clear recollection of one relevant discussion concerning Br Kostka Chute, namely a discussion he has with Br Mark May from Canberra, when Br Mark may relayed to him a complaint from a parent. Br Alexis thought that this must have been in 1976, as Br Kostka only started at Marist College Canberra on 1 February 1976, and Br Charles Howard ceased as the Provincial on 30 September 1976. Further, Br Kostka had been away in Freiburg Switzerland from 1 July 1975 to 31 January 1976. Note that Br Charles Howard was the Provincial from 20 August 1972 to 30 September 1976, having taken over in August 1972 from Br Othmar Weldon (deceased). Br Kieran Geaney (deceased) was Provincial from November 1976 to April 1983.

PJM Yes thank you I can hear you very well Br Alexis and Br Charles, good morning.

AT You will have to give it your best shot Patrick.

PJM Br Charles can you hear me now?

CH Yes Patrick, thank you.

PJM Thank you and welcome and nice to talk to you. What is the best way for me to address you. Is it ok if I call you Br Charles?

CH Call me anything. Charles is good.

PJM Thank you Charles. Now Charles I will try and keep this discussion short. I know that you have spoken to Br Alexis about it. Is that correct?

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AT You've spoken to me about it?

CH I didn't hear what he said.

AT Yes, he has chatted with me Patrick.

PJM OK. Now Charles we know that you were the Provincial between 1972 and 1976 – is that correct?

CH Yes I think so.

PJM OK. Now you of course know Br Kostka Chute well?

AT Patrick was asking if you know Br Kostka well?

CH I taught him and I know him fairly well but at the stage when I knew him, he wasn't all that old.

PJM Now Br Alexis has told me that you can remember one discussion about Br Kostka when there was a complaint in Canberra – Is that correct?

CH There was a complaint given to me from somebody outside the Brothers.

PJM What do you remember about it?

CH I remember that there had been some kind of accusation against one of the Brothers by I think a parent of one of the boys.

AT That was Br Mark May was it Charles, the Brother that received that complaint?

CH He was the one that mentioned it to me, yes.

PJM So what did he tell you?

CH He was rather doubtful that there was anything in this other than kids' talk and kids messing around a bit. Mark himself was a very good man – did you know Br Mark?

PJM No I didn't unfortunately.

CH Br Mark was a very fine person, a very very fine person. He gave me the impression that really there was nothing very serious about this, that it was – I don't know that he used these words, but that it was some kids messing around to some extent.

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- PJM Yes, and what did you do about it?
- CH Well, I was visiting there and he was continuing to look at this and what happened after that I think I was overseas probably. So whether he said anything to the Provincial or whatever, I don't know. (???)
- PJM Were you not the Provincial at this time that you are talking about?
- CH Was I what?
- AT Were you the Provincial when Mark spoke to you about it?
- CH Yes I think so, yes.
- PJM Can you remember which year it would have been? (Unresponsive reply)
- CH He wouldn't have put it in such a way that it was something very urgent and compelling and needed to be looked at tomorrow, that sort of thing. He was fairly convinced that it wasn't a serious matter. Now, what's serious and what's not serious, what's kids' play and what's not kids' play, what kids are getting back at one another, occasionally that happens of course with these things, not often, but occasionally it may happen.
- PJM Yes. Now what did Br Mark tell you about the complaint – what was the complaint?
- AT _____ the detail of the complaint – did he go into any detail?
- CH No, no, I think – I had the impression anyhow and this is a long time ago, I had the impression that the kids were fooling around a bit and it may well have been that they went a bit further than they meant to and the possibility was that – I don't think I went through all this at the same time – I didn't see myself as making a judgment on this – I saw myself as listening to Mark and the listening to Mark basically came up with the conclusion that this wasn't something serious or it might have been something that wasn't intended to be serious and became a bit more serious than it had been. I never took that from it. My cue that I took from Mark, and I realise it's a bit convenient to do this because Mark is dead, that Mark didn't take it as something very serious.
- PJM So was it something to do with sexual activity?
- AT Was it something to do with sexual activity?

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- CH I didn't know, but I suspect that it could have been.
- PJM Yes. Now why do you suspect that?
- CH Well there are not too many other serious offences that one confessed under that sort of thing and a sexual thing would have been relevant. And it doesn't follow that they are all that.
- PJM Yes, I understand. And did you speak to Br Kostka yourself about this issue?
- CH No. It wasn't my concern to do that, I was passing through, Br Mark was the Headmaster of the school, a very experienced Headmaster of this kind of school, and it would have been rather foolish for me to start rounding up all the cases like that, or that had been mentioned or as possibilities, or whatever. It was very important that Mark was there, because he his is a man of such experience. He had far more experience in those things than I did as a Headmaster – I was a Headmaster of secondary schools, boarding schools.
- AT Charles, Patrick asked earlier – Do you think you were Provincial at that time when you visited the school at that time – do you have a recollection – that's why you would have been visiting the school do you think?
- CH Yes.
- AT That answers your earlier question I think Patrick.
- PJM Yes it does, thank you Br Alexis. And Br Charles, as Provincial, did you not think it was up to you to speak to Br Kostka as well, or where you happy to leave that to the Headmaster?
- CH Well the thought was, but in a case like that, yes – the fact I said nothing to Mark of substance makes me think that I was content to leave it to him.
- PJM Yes, ok. And as far as the details of the complaint go, what can you remember?
- CH The only thing that I can remember is that Mark must have said something like – a complaint had been made against one boy – I think, but I'm not sure on this, I think by a parent, I think it would have just been by a boy, I can't see that it would have gone this far really. So I really can't give you anything on that. I would have been relying considerably on Br Mark. Now you can say well that's a refuge.

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- PJM No.
- CH Well between that and a much bigger complaint, I don't know really, anyhow I didn't think it was something that warranted that. Each time you go into a school there would be something.
- PJM Yes. Br Charles you wouldn't have written down any notes about that I assume?
- CH Did I take any notes down about that?
- PJM Yes.
- CH No I would have taken notes but about other more important things I think. I would have thought there would have been more important things.
- PJM Now Br Charles, we have interviewed Br Kostka as you probably know. We saw him in jail the other day.
- AT They have spoken to Br Kostka in jail, so they have spoken to Kostka and he made some comments about that time, so I think Patrick wants to just ask you about that.
- PJM I just want to see if you have any memory of certain things that Br Kostka raised with us Charles. The first relates to a time when he was the Principal at Penshurst and he remembers speaking to you around that time, probably in 1972 about a complaint against him there relating to sexual misbehaviour. Do you remember that?
- CH No I don't really. So that was two years later on was it?
- PJM No this would have been 1972 which was before he went to Canberra.
- CH Oh right.
- PJM So right at the very beginning of your time as Provincial.
- CH I wonder who was the Headmaster there.
- PJM He remembers that he spoke first to the Superior, Br Simon Murphy and then the matter was referred to you and he discussed it with you and you counselled him in various respects. Do you remember anything like that or not?
- CH No, I'm just trying to think who the Headmaster might have been at Penshurst.

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- AT It was Br Murphy. I think he was
- PJM Simon Murphy was the Superior, Br Alexis and Br Kostka was the Headmaster.
- CH Was that the one the complaint was about or was it Kostka?
- PJM The complaint was about Kostka. But it went to Simon Murphy because he was the Superior there and Br Kostka thinks that Simon must have spoken to you about it because Br Kostka himself was the Headmaster there of the primary school at the time.
- CH Kostka was involved seemingly in the two incidents.
- PJM Do you remember this one or not?
- CH No I don't remember that. If I had remembered it, I would have thought that I would have probably said something about it to Mark.
- PJM Yes. The other thing that Br Kostka has said is this – he was sent to Freiburg in 1975 by you when you were the Provincial and he thinks that one of the reasons for that was for him to get help with this problem with sexual issues. Is his memory correct?
- AT Did you hear that?
- CH No, yes I heard it I think. Do I remember that? No, in fact it is surprising that Mark, that he didn't come up with Mark too.
- PJM Well let me ask you then Charles, why did he go to Freiburg in 1975?
- CH Why did he go?
- PJM Yes for his Second Novitiate?
- CH People of his age, we used to send about four or five a year about that time and it would partly be on age. I don't ever recall sending somebody there for that kind of help because the people you were running those things weren't expert giving that kind of assistance needed for people. It was more overall balance and it certainly wasn't as though they were only the people who were sent to Freiburg or sent there as requiring some additional sexual help. In the time that I was Provincial, I think it would have been true for most of them. That wouldn't have been a key aim. No doubt with some people they would have helped, but in general the people we have running those centres – not that I can recall, they were not people who were gifted in sexual maturity.

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- PJM Yes I understand. And as far as Kostka is concerned, you don't remember that that was one of the reasons why you sent him there?
- CH No, I wouldn't have any idea really that that could have been a possibility, although someone might find some notes made somewhere. It may have been at a Council meeting where they appointed Kostka to go there if some reference had been made to some incident, but I certainly had no knowledge of that that I can possibly recall. When things are 20 or 30 years ago, you might be making a fair number of mistakes.
- PJM Yes, it's a long time ago isn't it. Now Charles, apart from that, Br Kostka, seemed to remember that he had spoken to you about the sexual problem of his on a number of different occasions and you were trying to help him through it to get spiritual direction and counselling and medical help and whatever. Do you remember anything like that or not?
- CH No not at all and I would wonder possibly, whether it was a belated discovery perhaps or a determination, yes perhaps a determination to get rid of it. But that doesn't mean either I think that he would have disclosed things which he otherwise might not have.
- PJM Yes, I understand. So did you know when you were Provincial that he was getting some help or not?
- CH Did I what?
- AT Did you know when you were Provincial that he was getting some help or talking to someone about this sort of thing?
- CH No, not that I was aware of, but it could have been.
- PJM Do you know of a chap called Fr Cox?
- CH Brothers don't have to go to the Provincial in fact they might well have someone who is more prominent, in some areas such as sexuality.
- PJM Yes.
- AT Patrick is asking did you know a Fr Cox? I think he is referring to that MSC guy – Cox.
- CH Was it Dallas Cox?

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- PJM I don't have his full name.
- AT There was a Dallas Cox I think and I think he was the Priest that Kostka went to at the time from the Bondi thing, if that is the same Fr Cox, Patrick that you are asking about, that was Dallas Cox.
- PJM Yes it is. Well Charles did you know that he was getting help from Fr Dallas Cox?
- CH No. I knew him, but I didn't know him well and I didn't every have anything much to do with him. When did Kostka meet him?
- AT I think at Kensington – I think what Des Phillips told us was that he used to go there for confession or something. That was my understanding.
- PJM Yes he was the Parish Priest at North Randwick at a time
- AT Oh he was the Parish Priest was he at that time?
- PJM Yes, and Br Kostka got some help from him.
- AT At the Parish there at Randwick at the MSC.
- PJM OK, Charles is there anything else that you want to mention about this issue with Br Kostka relating to ...?
- AT Anything else that you want to mention or anything about Kostka that might be – in your knowledge or anything like this.
- CH No, not really. He was an average sort of a student. Got on well with people and this kind of problem in my experience is it is usually – it emerges, it comes out very quietly really. It's not somebody who is rampant with it.
- PJM And Charles if I could conclude by just asking a few questions about you. How old are you now?
- AT How old are you now Chas?
- CH 85 going on 86.
- PJM And how fit and well are you, what is your state of health?
- AT What is your state of health, how fit and well are you?

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- CH Depends you asks the question. My health is pretty good, in a sense I've had very little by way of operations and things like that, but the memory is going, the memory is not what it used to be and the mind is reasonably clear for most things, at 85 plus.
- PJM OK that helps me and Br Alexis is there anything else that you would like to ask Charles to cover.
- AT No, I don't think so. As you know Patrick, I didn't want to, as it were groom Charles, but I thought I needed to at least give him an idea of the sorts of things you would be asking. Now what he said is very consistent with what he said to me. What may be of interest for you – you probably realise is it – after 1976 basically Charles was out of the country, so certainly after that time Kostka wouldn't have had the opportunity to be talking to him or getting advice or that sort of thing.
- PJM Yes I did notice on that point Br Alexis, that Charles was the Provincial for four years rather than the usual six year period and that he stopped on 30 September 1976.
- AT And the reason for that is, he was kicked upstairs. In 1976, there was a world conference in Rome at which Charles, even though he hadn't finished his term as Provincial, he was elected to the General Council in Rome and the way it worked was basically you just packed your bag and left, you didn't wait – that was the way it was and it still is the way that it works.
- PJM Yes, because there was a little gap between him being Provincial and Br Keiran being appointed presumably that was while the process were taking place.
- AT Usually the Deputy Provisional would act as Provincial until such time as there was another election or they reviewed the voting from the last chapter to get guidance on who would take his place.
- PJM Ok, just one other thing while I am talking to you, I'm just trying to work out Br Mark May's role at the relevant time. Now we know that he was the College Principal from 1970 to 1973, but if this happened in 1976, what was Mark May doing then?
- AT In 1976, I think he went on to the Province team as an education consultant (LATER CONFIRMED THIS WAS NOT CORRECT – SEE BELOW), that's what Charles as referring to, he was someone that he would consult in matters specifically school and so on, but I don't have – if you can just bear with me a moment, I've got the 1970 appointments list here, I'm trying to see....

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- PJM According to the list you have given me, I have a list of the Principals and the Provincials at relevant times and my list shows that Mark May was the College Principal at Canberra from 1 January 1970 to 31 December 1973.
- AT Yes, I think it was 1974 actually. I think he was there 1974 – I did double check that myself, but I was looking at the broader appointments just to see where Mark was in 1975 and 1976, so if you can bear with me a moment, I can probably tell you because I've got the I can ring the secretary at Drummoyne – she could probably tell me straight away where he was in 1975/76, is that any help?
- PJM Yes it would be because I am a little confused as to dates
- AT (PHONES NOELLE AT DRUMMOYNE) Noelle, could you tell me where Mark May who is deceased was in 1975 and 76 on your appointments list there?
- PJM Br Alexis, while you are looking, I'll just put this on tape so that I can remember what I am presently thinking, because Br Charles Howard was the Provincial from 72 to September 1976, but my Ministry Schedule for Br Kostka shows that he only started at Canberra on 1 February 1976. So the only ...
- AT You are referring to Kostka?
- PJM Yes, 1 February 76 because he was at Parramatta before he went to Freiburg, so if my list is correct, the only time when he was at Canberra and Charles was the Provincial, was 1976 and accordingly to my listing, Mark May was not the College Principal in 1976.
- AT No he wasn't.
- PJM Br Joseph McMahon was, that's why I'm a little confused.
- AT Yes he was, Kostka was at Randwick in 74, that's right. Then he was at Parramatta in 75, then he went to Canberra in 76, in other words it must have been 76 Chas. 1976 when Are you sure the Mark complaint was about Canberra? Or could it have been somewhere else do you think?
- CH Well my recollection of it was Canberra because there weren't very many of these.
- PJM Well he was in Canberra in 76.

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- AT So it could have been Canberra 76, but if it was before that, it may have – well Chas thinks it was Canberra – anyway that’s about all I can say Patrick, I don’t know.
- PJM But Chas seems very sure that it was Mark May who was the person who was managing it.
- AT You are pretty sure it was Mark May who made the comment about ...
- CH Yes.
- AT (Br Alexis rang out again) - Noelle, where was Kostka in 75 and 76? Where was Mark May in 75/76? Mark May he spent the first six months of 1975 in Switzerland at the same Second Novitiate and from June 1975 until the end of 1980, he was at Parramatta.
- PJM As the Principal I assume, or what.
- AT Yes primary Principal.
- PJM So Br Alexis, I don’t now exactly how you should do this, but could you try and see whether Br Charles can clarify all of this, because in 1976, Mark May wasn’t at the school in Canberra.
- AT That’s right.
- PJM But 1976 is the only year where there is an overlap between Kostka being at the school and Charles being the Provincial.
- AT You wouldn’t have heard that Charles, Kostka did not go to Canberra until 1976 right, but Mark May in 76 he wasn’t at Canberra, he was in Parramatta. Mark was at Parramatta in 76, so, I know it’s a long time ago, but let’s try to work it out. Is it a confusion of dates, or is it a confusion of faces. That’s Kostka Chute, that’s the basic thing. It’s a question of – do you have any idea of what year Mark may have mentioned this to you, was it before 76 or?
- CH Well Mark was the Headmaster I’m sure and Mark said that he talked to Kostka about it. He wasn’t sure how serious it was.
- AT But Kostka wasn’t at Canberra when Mark May was there.
- CH Kostka was at Canberra.

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- AT Well Kostka wasn't there when Mark was there. That's the problem.
- PJM We might just have to leave it there Br Alexis, I don't want to confuse him.
- AT I think probably Chas and I can try and sort it out off the phone. I just think it might keep you on the phone for a while why we try to work it out.
- PJM Yes well just see if it is capable of clarification.
- AT We'll see if we can make some progress on it. We'll write down some figures and places and so on because Br Mark, I've just ascertained, he went to Parramatta after that, he did become consultant in the problems for education later, but apparently it was after 1980 – I don't think Kostka was at Parramatta, so I'm a little confused myself I must say.
- PJM Well if you get it clarified within the next 20 minutes or so and you want to give me a ring, I will record what you both say.
- AT OK we'll have a yarn and just see if we can make some sense of it. Otherwise, I will send you a note on it.
- PJM Thank you Br Alexis, and Br Charles, thank you very much for your help, we really appreciate it.
- CH Fine Patrick.

End of interview