

I had heard about it before but I was appalled to watch the Lateline story last night that the Marist Brothers assert they had no responsibility for events at Pearce because they didn't run the school. This is high order legal shenanigans and shows the Order in a terrible light. Of course the original conduct was even worse and there is an on-going question about who knew what and when, and what if anything was done about it, which goes to liability. This question may still be open, but "it wasn't us or our school" is a pathetic line.

The Catholic church has plenty of form in ducking responsibility in this area. This development suggests nothing has been learnt from previous experience and the enormous damage to reputation and standing. I wonder what current staff employed at Marist Brothers schools make of the employer making assertions like this which could lead to the innocent being left on the wrong side of civil legal proceedings if no-one can be found who was responsible for running a Marist Brothers school?

We lived at Pearce in the late 70's and knew of some strange behaviour of Kostka because he was ever-present at the house of a neighbour who had a son at the school. That to one side, to hear that the order is attempting to shelter behind smart-arse legal arguments that sound preposterous is a sad comment on current leadership. If one of the answers to all this is that the Order's insurers are managing the whole thing I'd suggest that the proper thing is to send them packing. That might be at some cost to the Order but at least there would be a chance of maintaining integrity through sensitive and proper handling of these matters. If lawyers point to obscure legal points that could be made but which offend principle and ethics and make no sense in the court of public opinion, you need to wrest back control over your own reputation.

I'm sure there are plenty of voices within who share these sentiments but thought I would add my voice to what must be many dismayed by the whole episode.

Please feel free to pass this on to anyone interested.

Cheers.

**RED**.