

PRESS RELEASE DATED June 5 2008

Brother Kostka Chute appeared in Court today for sentencing following his earlier guilty plea to acts of indecency involving students at Marist College, Canberra, in past years.

We acknowledge our responsibility to those who have been hurt through his actions. We reiterate our sincere regrets and apology to all who have suffered harm as a consequence of his actions.

The serious wrongs of the past and the damage done to victims of sexual abuse are a cause of deep shame and sorrow for the Marist Brothers.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all involved in the legal process and to those within the College community who are adversely affected by these matters. We apologise also to the Catholic Church community of Canberra for the scandal and embarrassment we have caused.

The Marist Brothers are determined to right the wrongs of the past. Any person who has suffered abuse at Marist College, whether sexual, physical or emotional, is encouraged to come forward to either the Marists, the Catholic Church Professional Standards Office or the Police. The Towards Healing report line is 1 300 369977.

In all of this, the Marist Brothers are determined to ensure that each and every victim without exception is heard and receives healing and justice. It is the case that a number of legal actions have been filed on behalf of former students in the Supreme Court. These claims inevitably involve some legal complexity and contention. The Marist Brothers hope that all such cases can be referred to mediation and that just and fair outcomes are achieved for all victims at the earliest possible time.

The protection of young people entrusted to our care is our priority. Learning from the past, we are confident that our colleges now have all possible protective systems and practices in place. We are determined that the highest standards of pastoral care be offered to provide the optimal environment for each young person to grow and learn.

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