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Professional Standards Resource Group
Report on Further Facilitation between the Christian Brothers and VV

VV

Introduction

As part of the Towards Healing process, a further facilitation was carried out pursuant to the PSRG Guidelines to address issues of concern raised by VV relating to time he spent in the care of the Christian Brothers at Bindoon between 1954 and 1961.

The purposes of the facilitation were:

1. to provide VV with an opportunity to discuss his concerns arising from the previous meeting with representatives of the Christian Brothers; and
2. to explore any ways in which the Brothers could respond meaningfully to these concerns.

Meetings

I spoke with VV by phone prior to the meeting. In this discussion, VV was able to elaborate on his concerns arising from his previous meeting, and what he was hoping to achieve from the further meeting.

The facilitation meeting was held on 16 July 2010 at 10.00am in the Catholic Pastoral Centre, 40A Mary Street Highgate. VV attended on his own, and the Christian Brothers were represented by Peter Negus and Warwick Bryant. VV spoke about the matters which had concerned him from the previous meetings, including his perception that he was not believed in relation to certain aspects of his complaint, and how important it was to him to be believed. VV also discussed his concerns in relation to his belief that he was promised a block of land, and how this was perceived by him to be part of the abuse he had received. Finally, VV was also able to relate an incident that occurred to him early on in his time at Bindoon which he had not been able to talk about at the previous meeting.

In response, Br Warwick stated that although he had expressed surprise at one aspect of what V had said previously, he wished to clarify that this did not mean he disbelieved V. Br Warwick confirmed that he absolutely believed what V had said at the meeting.

Br Peter thanked V for having the courage to come to the meeting and share the additional story of what had happened, which Peter described as 'horrific'. Br Peter said that V's story affected him deeply, and that he was sorry that V had not received the genuine love he needed.

Br Peter also stated that all the land which had previously been owned by the Christian Bros had been transferred for use by the schools (except for the houses which the Brothers themselves lived in), and could not now be sold or transferred for other purposes. Br Peter also stated that the payment which had already been made to V was at the upper end of the Christian Bros' limits, and could not now be increased. However, the Christian Brothers were prepared to consider any other (non monetary) ways in which they could provide support to V. In this regard, V indicated that he wished to assist his grandchildren to obtain entry to Trinity and asked if the Brothers could help with this objective in any way. V also indicated that he felt that he had missed out on receiving an education and felt particularly challenged in the area of maths and would appreciate some tutoring in this area.

Outcome

Following this discussion, Brother Peter indicated that he would talk to the Principal of Trinity to enquire as to the possibility of V's grandchildren obtaining entry to the school. Peter made it clear that he could not guarantee that this would happen but that he would see what he could do. I understand that Br Peter is also giving consideration to V's request for assistance in relation to maths tutoring.

The Christian Brothers would also continue to support V's counselling sessions with Pip White for as long as they were required.

Conclusion

The facilitation enabled V to express the concerns which he had in relation to his previous meetings, and relate the further incident which needed to be shared. I am hopeful that the further meeting and agreed outcomes will contribute to V's ongoing journey of healing.

Graham Castledine
Mediator
30 July 2010

