

**MINUTES OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

**DATE:** 22 April, 1997      **CHAIR:** Sr. Berneice Loch

**PRESENT:** Berneice Loch, Anne Slattery, Geoff O'Driscoll, Darren Holzberger  
Sr. Di-Anne Rowan, Congregational Leader and Mrs. Myolene Carrick  
from the Archdiocesan Social Response office attended.  
(Sue Prosser was absent on holidays)

**1. PRAYER** - led by Berneice Loch

It was agreed that we set aside the formal agenda for 21 (22) April in order to discuss the current situation of having to address many complaints which have come to us following the recent publication of our CPSC phone number and the Sixty Minutes Program. Instead, the meeting address (a) the complaints received and (b) our possible responses.

**2. COMPLAINTS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVED:**

Possibly as many as 130 - 150 phone calls have been dealt with in the past ten days. There are a few outstanding calls to which an initial response has yet to be made but this is because the number given could not be raised. Attempts are continuing. In Sue's absence, Jenny Casey, as social worker has been employed to assist. About 1/3 needed to be relayed to other Mercy or non-Mercy Congregations. Approx. 20 - 30 were calls of support. Some were anonymous so no response is possible.

There remain approx. 42 to be registered as complaints and we are in the process of documenting these adequately. Twenty sisters have been named as having complaints against them. Five of these are alive. The committee members were supplied with what we hope is adequate details to give them a picture of what we need to address. Three other members of staff (all male) have been named and we are led to believe that charges have been laid against the one of the three who is still alive.

**3. RESPONSE STRATEGIES**

Myolene outlined for the group the dealings she has had with Neerkol "kids". In addition she gave a great deal of information about what she has learnt in her role as a contact person for the Archdiocese. She sees the principles in working with complaints about physical abuse being exactly the same as those involved in working with sexual abuse.

In response to our questions about "what people are looking for", Myolene gave as examples:

- some just want to be listened to with empathy
- some want acknowledgment that "it is true"

**NEXT MEETING:**

Geoff has indicated that 12/5, the date suggested for the next meeting, will not be suitable for him. There is need to negotiate an alternative if possible. Action Berneice.

**ACTION:**

All members of the Committee are requested to get back to Berneice as soon as possible with comments on

- (a) The draft Guidelines for Response as attached  
It if it at all possible to do so, it would be good to have these responses collated and amendments made to the point of consensus of the committee, in order to be able to recommend the Guidelines to the next meeting of the Leadership Team which is on 6, 7 May
- (b) Their availability on Tues 13/5 or Mon 26/5 for the next meeting  
Alternatively, a teleconference hookup on Monday 12/5 or Tuesday 13/5 from say 9.30 till 11.00 am or 1 - 2.30 PM could be considered if people were available.