



DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Catholic Communications

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ATTENTION : ALL MEDIA

30.5.96

Statement from Bishop Michael Malone

Today Fr. Vincent Ryan was sentenced as a result of sexual abuse charges with minors. In response I am presenting the following time-line and attachments which detail the Catholic Church's approach to this particular case.

Sexual abuse has a jarring effect on our society. The issue of clergy sexual abuse has been distressing for all of the community but most particularly for victims and their families. Sexual misconduct by personnel of the Catholic Church is contrary to Christian principles and is therefore intolerable.

Now that the legal process re Fr. Vince Ryan has taken effect, it is hoped that the Church can learn from this painful experience. The Church must listen to the needs of people and be receptive to the pain that people experience in their lives.

Time-line Detailing Catholic Church's Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse

- ~ 11 October 1995 : Fr. Vince Ryan immediately withdrawn from active ministry.
- ~ 14/15 October 1995 : Bishop Leo Clarke visited Taree parish to speak with the people of that parish community (Fr. Vince Ryan's most recent parish).
- ~ 4/5 November 1995 : Bishop Michael Malone visited Cessnock parish to speak with the people of that parish community (Fr. Vince Ryan's previous parish).
- ~ November 1995 : Bishop Michael available to media for comment.
- ~ 17 November 1995 : Free, confidential, professional and independent Counselling and Support Service (CASS) made available to those who have suffered abuse by Diocesan personnel. This service has been advertised and will continue to appear periodically in newspapers, parish bulletins and school newsletters (see attachment 1).
- ~ 17 November 1995 : Parishes and parish groups offered the opportunity to discuss their response to clergy sexual abuse with professional facilitators.
- ~ 18/19 November 1995 : Bishop Michael's Pastoral Statement read at all parishes in the Diocese (see attachment 2).
- ~ 24 April 1996 : Statement from Bishop Michael Malone - Media Release (see attachment 3). Fr. Bill Burston (Vicar General) available to media for comment.
- ~ 26 April 1996 : "Catholic Bishops release 'plan of action' for dealing with sexual abuse" - Media Release (see attachment 4).
- ~ 26 April 1996 : Pastoral Letter to the Catholic people of Australia (see attachment 5). Bishop Michael available to media for comment.
- ~ 26 April 1996 : Transcript ABC's "7.30 Report" Bishop Geoffrey Robinson member of Church's Professional Standards Committee interviewed by Kerry O'Brien (see attachment 6).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
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