

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 1992

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT ST PAUL'S NATIONAL SEMINARY, KENSINGTON, N.S.W. FROM TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER TO FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 1992

ATTENDANCE The following were present

- + Edward Cardinal Clancy, Archbishop of Sydney, *President*
- + Francis Carroll, Archbishop of Canberra & Goulburn, *Vice-President*
- + Leonard Faulkner, Archbishop of Adelaide
- + Thomas Francis Little, Archbishop of Melbourne
- + Joseph Eric D'Arcy, Archbishop of Hobart
- + Barry Hickey, Archbishop of Perth
- + John Bathersby, Archbishop of Brisbane
- + Ivan Prasko, Eparch of Ss Peter and Paul of Melbourne
- + John Jobst, Bishop of Broome
- + Douglas Warren, Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes
- + Ronald Mulkearns, Bishop of Ballarat
- + John Satterthwaite, Bishop of Lismore
- + Peter Quinn, Bishop of Bunbury
- + David Cremin, Auxiliary, Sydney
- + William Murray, Bishop of Wollongong
- + John Gerry, Auxiliary, Brisbane
- + Robert Healy, Auxiliary, Perth
- + Joseph O'Connell, Auxiliary, Melbourne
- + Leo Clarke, Bishop of Maitland
- + Patrick Dougherty, Bishop of Bathurst
- + Noel Daly, Bishop of Sandhurst
- + Bede Heather, Bishop of Parramatta
- + Francis Peter De Campo, Bishop of Port Pirie
- + Eugene James Cuskelly, Auxiliary, Brisbane
- + William Brennan, Bishop of Wagga Wagga
- + Geoffrey Robinson, Auxiliary, Sydney
- + Raymond Benjamin, Bishop of Townsville
- + Geoffrey Mayne, Military Ordinary, Australia
- + Patrick Power, Auxiliary, Canberra and Goulburn
- + Edmund Collins, Bishop of Darwin
- + George Riashi, Eparch of St Michael's of Sydney
- + Peter Connors, Auxiliary, Melbourne
- + George Pell, Auxiliary, Melbourne
- + Jeremiah Coffey, Bishop of Sale
- + Kevin Manning, Bishop of Armidale
- + Brian Heenan, Bishop of Rockhampton
- + Justin Bianchini, Bishop of Geraldton
- + James Foley, Bishop of Cairns

NEW MEMBERS OF CONFERENCE

Bishop Justin Bianchini, of Geraldton and Bishop James Foley of Cairns, were warmly welcomed.

3 **OBSERVERS**

Delegates from the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes:

Brother Alexis Turton
 fins Sister Angela Ryan
 csb

4 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:

Bishop Murphy, representing Conference at the presentation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in Rome; and, for part of the meeting, Bishops Benjamin, Collins, Cuskelly, Dougherty and Jobst.

5 **OPENING MASS**

The Mass of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception was concelebrated in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart Monastery, Kensington, at 7 am on Tuesday 8 December 1992. The President of Conference, Cardinal Clancy, was the principal celebrant and preached the homily.

6 **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The meeting began after recitation of Prayer During The Day at 9.15 am on Tuesday 8 December.

The President, Cardinal Clancy, welcomed the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, Archbishop Franco Brambilla; the Observers from the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, Sister Angela Ryan csb and Brother Alexis Turton fins; and the Media Officer, Miss Mary Newport.

7 **MESSAGE TO THE HOLY FATHER**

The Conference sent this message to His Holiness, John Paul II:

THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS, MEETING IN CONFERENCE IN SYDNEY IN THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT, SEND GREETINGS TO THE HOLY FATHER, *AS WE WAIT IN JOYFUL HOPE FOR THE COMING OF OUR SAVIOUR.*

TODAY WE JOIN WITH PETER IN PRAYING THAT *ALL WHO HOLD AND TEACH THE CATHOLIC FAITH* WILL BE HELPED BY THE PUBLICATION OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ENCOURAGED BY THE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *PASTORES DABO VOBIS*, OUR MEETING WILL CONSIDER AND PLAN FOR THE CONTINUING FORMATION OF PRIESTS. IN DOING SO, WE UNITE OURSELVES WITH THE INTENTIONS OF THE HOLY FATHER AND ASK THE FAVOUR OF HIS APOSTOLIC BLESSING.

His Eminence, Cardinal Sodano, the Secretary of State, replied:

THE HOLY FATHER WAS PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE DEVOTED MESSAGE OF ECCLESIAL COMMUNION WHICH YOU SENT TO HIM ON BEHALF OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE MEETING IN PLENARY SESSION. CONFIDENT THAT THE PUBLICATION OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WILL GREATLY ASSIST YOU IN FULFILLING YOUR MISSION TO TEACH THE APOSTOLIC FAITH IN ITS INTEGRITY HE PRAYS THAT YOUR DELIBERATIONS WILL ENCOURAGE YOUR BROTHER PRIESTS TO GROW EVER MORE FULLY IN THE IMAGE OF CHRIST THE HEAD AND SHEPHERD OF THE CHURCH AND INSPIRE RENEWED ZEAL FOR EVANGELIZATION AND HOLINESS OF LIFE AMONG ALL THE FAITHFUL ENTRUSTED TO YOUR PASTORAL CARE. COMMENDING YOU TO THE INTERCESSION OF MARY IMMACULATE HIS HOLINESS CORDIALLY IMPARTS THE REQUESTED APOSTOLIC BLESSING AS A PLEDGE OF GRACE AND PEACE IN CHRIST HER SON.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

Greetings from the Most Rev James Gleeson, former Archbishop of Adelaide, were gratefully received. In addition, a letter was tabled from Brother Kelvin Canavan fins, of the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board congratulating the Conference on its social justice document, *Common Wealth for the Common Good*.

9 ARCHBISHOP GOODY

Conference recorded with sorrow the death of the former Archbishop of Perth, Sir Lancelot Goody, who died on 13 May 1992. Archbishop Goody was remembered, together with other deceased bishops, at Mass on Friday 11 December.

10 BISHOP KELLY (Cf these minutes n.55)

Conference voted to send a message of gratitude for past contributions and good wishes for retirement to Bishop Edward Kelly, who retired as Bishop of Toowoomba on 20 November 1992.

11 MESSAGE TO RETIRED BISHOPS

Conference agreed to send greetings to:

- + J P Carroll, Former Auxiliary Archbishop, Sydney
- + J W Gleeson, Former Archbishop of Adelaide
- + A F Fox, Former Bishop of Sale
- + J Cullinane, Former Auxiliary Bishop, Melbourne
- + M McKeon, Former Bishop of Bunbury
- + H Kennedy, Former Bishop of Armidale
- + J Torpie, Former Bishop of Cairns
- + J Morgan, Former Military Vicar
- + A Khalife, Former Bishop of St Maroun, Sydney
- + E Perkins, Former Auxiliary, Melbourne
- + F Rush, Former Archbishop of Brisbane
- + J Heaps, Former Auxiliary, Sydney

12 VISIT OF THE APOSTOLIC PRO-NUNCIO

His Excellency addressed the bishops during the Opening Session of the Meeting.

13

The Minutes of the April 1992 Meeting had been distributed to all members of the Conference.

MOTION That the Minutes of the April 1992 Plenary Meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference be taken as read and be confirmed.

CARRIED

14

REDACTED
Relevance





CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

94 SPECIAL ISSUES

Father Brian Lucas addressed Conference on his study trip to North America and answered questions from the floor.

Subsequently, Conference discussed and amended a draft Pastoral Statement on Child Protection and Child Sexual Abuse.

MOTION That the statement as amended be published as soon as possible to priests and the Catholic Press.

**CARRIED
(APPENDIX VI)**

PASTORAL STATEMENT ON CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

In recent years, society has become more aware of the tragedy of physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children. There are crimes which are all the more reprehensible because of the abuse of the trust the child has placed in the offender.

Offenders against children are not limited to any occupation, social class, religion, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or age group. Many have been victims of abuse themselves. Often they suffer from previously undetected personality disorders. Most are closely related to their victims or are family friends.

It is very distressing for all church people to discover that a child has been abused by some one associated with a parish, school, child care centre or other church agency. Even one case is one too many and cannot be excused or ignored.

In the past, lacking the knowledge provided by the modern behavioural sciences, church authorities sometimes denied or minimized the seriousness of such incidents or accepted too readily the promise by an offender that such behaviour would not be repeated. Mistakes have been made. They need to be acknowledged and are being acknowledged.

Becoming more aware of the problem and with experience gained in other parts of the world, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference established a special committee in 1988. The committee included people with relevant expertise in dealing with allegations of child sexual assault.

Since that time, this committee has played an active role in educating bishops, congregational leaders and other church authorities about the problem of child abuse. As well, everything possible is being done to enhance and protect the welfare of children and to uphold the trust which children place in church personnel.

The procedures which have been established and which are continually being reviewed, aim to ensure, as far as possible:

- 1 That all church agencies have in place policies that aim to prevent children being at risk, including a policy that priests, religious and other church workers will not be allowed to remain in a position involving risk to children if they are found to have offended;
- 2 That there will be care and support for any victims and their families;
- 3 That there is a speedy and decisive response to any allegations;
- 4 That the proper processes of the legal system will not be impeded in any way;
- 5 That those against whom allegations are made will be treated justly and compassionately; and
- 6 That an offender will be offered appropriate therapy and counselling.

The Pontifical Council for the Family sponsored an international summit in Bangkok 9-11 September 1992 on the sexual exploitation of children. We endorse the comments made in the Final Declaration:

The sexual exploitation of children is a grave crime against the dignity of the human person¹.

'We commit ourselves to do all in our power to promote the God-given human values which recognize every child as a sacred gift to be nurtured, protected and loved'.

Abuse of children, will never be tolerated. We shall continue to do all that is possible to protect those children who are given into the care of our schools, hospitals, child care centres, or other youth facilities.

The Church will play its part in co-operation with the community in creating a wholesome and protective environment for children and their families and in finding solutions to this serious social problem.

The following pages have been
intentionally excluded:

1813-1841, 1843-1858 inclusive