

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
HELD AT ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL PRESBYTERY, SYDNEY, N.S.W.,
ON MONDAY, 18TH DECEMBER, 1995, AT 10.00 A.M.

1. PRESENT: Most Reverend Kevin Manning, Chairman,
 Most Reverend Geoffrey Robinson,
 Most Reverend Peter Connors, Secretary,
 Ms Myolene Carrick,
 Sister Helen Clarke, R.S.C.,
 Reverend Brian Lucas,
 Sister Angela Ryan, C.S.B.,
 Reverend John Usher,
 Sister Evelyn Woodward, R.S.J.

Father Brian Gallagher, M.S.C., presented his apology for being unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Chris O'Malley, Mr Paul Serong and Mr. Denis O'Connell of Catholic Church Insurances Limited were also present at the meeting.

2. ATTENDANCE OF DOCTOR ROBERT GRANT

Bishop Manning welcomed Doctor Robert Grant to the meeting. Doctor Grant had come to Australia at the invitation of the Brothers of Saint John of God and had already given much assistance to Bishop Robinson in the preparation of the draft document on Sexual Abuse.

By way of introduction, Doctor Grant informed the Committee that he is a Psychologist who has been closely involved with many communities in dealing with trauma.

He also provided the Committee with a document which has been prepared for eventual circulation in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul in the United States and which he considers deals very adequately with the matters which this Committee wishes to consider in its own documents.

Doctor Grant also suggested that any documents which are published by the Committee should carry the qualification of being "subject to further review".

In commenting on the Draft prepared by Bishop Robinson, Doctor Grant agreed that the main emphasis should be on the victims of sexual abuse. However, the document must also address the rights and the responsibilities of the offenders. It is the view of Doctor Grant that offenders do calculate their offence and must take responsibility for their offence.

The healing of communities must also be a major issue.

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Close attention was then given to the sections dealing with Offenders.

It was agreed that the Committee should eventually produce documents for publication on a number of issues, e.g. victims, offenders, parishes and schools, other communities, bishops and religious leaders, priests, prevention.

A major issue remains as to how we are to act with regard to the future of offenders.

There is also the need to provide details on how the investigation is to be carried out when a disclosure is made known to the competent authorities in the Church.

Another matter of major concern is the need for assurances to be given when a priest is transferred from one diocese to another, or when a priest is presented for the faculties of the diocese where he resides. The assurances that the priest is not aware of any circumstances which might lead to an allegation of criminal sexual abuse are to be given by the priest himself and his bishop or religious leader.

Doctor Grant also recommended that any documents published by the Bishops and Religious Leaders should not include any recommendation which cannot be put into practice.

3. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is to be decided in the New Year and notice will be forwarded to the Members.
