

*Sent in March 1998.*

*Archbishop George Pell  
Archbishop of Melbourne  
St Patrick's Cathedral  
Melbourne Vic  
3000*

*Graeme Sleeman*

REDACTED

*My Lord Bishop,*

*I spoke to you in late December 1997 regarding how my family and I have been drastically effected, emotionally, financially and career wise, since I resigned as Principal of Holy Family School Doveton in 1986. I was forced to take such action in an effort to have something done about Father Searson's behaviour which was contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.*

*I had to deal with Fr Rebec's behaviour before Fr Season's and was able to avoid a scandal against the church on that occasion. I made a passionate plea, to the then Vicar General Monsignor Peter Connors, to send a priest to Doveton who was very pastorally orientated. As history shows Fr Searson was appointed as parish priest and virtually from day one his anti church behaviour began, which made the role of principal in a catholic school very difficult, to the point of impossible if one wanted to be true to one's beliefs and the teachings of the church.*

*Can you imagine the inner turmoil and anguish I had to contend with on a daily bases when I had concrete evidence of immoral and dishonest activities being perpetrated by Fr Searson yet no one from the archbishop down would believe me. The binding obligation undertaken by me when I signed my contract of principalship was to uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Protection of Children. I endeavoured to do this and received many accolades from Catholic Education Office and the State Education Department, with the highest*

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commendation coming with Holy Family School being nominated as a finalist in the School of the year award of 1986. Yet with all this work and effort the church authorities appeared to turn a blind eye and adopted the approach that if the school was running so well things really can't be that bad. The stock statement given, was, " you are keeping everything under control and who can we send there if you leave." At what cost to my personal well being? I now ask myself daily if anyone did really believe in the pastoral role of the church or did they only express these ideas when they were in the safety of their offices. It appears that I was on my own and for my unbending loyalty to Holy Family School, Catholic Education, and the Catholic Church, I was cast aside, and left on my own to survive as best I could.

Through endless harassment from the press and media, the latest being the 19th December 1997, I have always refused to disclose what I know. I even maintained this silence on my time in Doveton at job interviews to my detriment. Even when I asked for legal representation when being interviewed by the Police Child Protection Squad, in the early 1990s I was refused and treated like an outcast. Being told by the Vicar General of the time that I had to be guided by my conscience to how I conducted myself at the interview.

Today I now find my family and I have paid an immeasurable price for my effort and loyalty, and the past 12 years have been like hell. In an effort to obtain employment to support my family, I resorted to driving a horse truck 100hrs a week and moved interstate to gain some peace of mind from the events in Melbourne. Yet after being asked to appear at the Commission I realised that I had not achieved this and am now receiving professional help at my own expense to address this problem.

How do you think I felt when I had to tell my youngest daughter why I was going to Melbourne and her reply was "Dad I just thought that you got tired of being a principal and left." In all that time how was she feeling, living with me must have been extremely difficult when she could see what my wife and I had worked so hard



to achieve just disappear to the stage where we barely existed from one day to the next

I am now asking you to, restore my integrity and to compensate my family and I for the loss of professional advancement, health, lifestyle, and for the lost years we have had to suffer due to my loyalty to the Catholic Church. I have always tried to deal with these problems without involving a third party and I hope I can continue to do so. I believe, if what I read about you in the papers is correct, then you will administer a just and fair judgement towards my family and I and perhaps we may be able to return to a similar lifestyle my family enjoyed before leaving Holy Family Doveton. No doubt the Catholic Education Office will advise you that I resigned my position but the reverse of that is that I could easily be found guilty of failing to fulfil duty of care, by not taking the action I took.

May God's Blessings be upon you

Yours in Christ

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Graeme Sleeman