

Panel 6: Formation of Clergy and Religious

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1. Screening procedures

- How it was done – osmosis

2. Formation

- Where it was done – in isolation; us/them dualism

3. On identity-forming, the beginnings of clericalism

4. Appointment and training of staff

5. Ongoing formation

6. Factors mentioned as having contributed to abuse

- clericalism
- the way we ‘name’ ourselves
- seeing child abuse as the perpetrator’s moral flaw
- confession

7. Factors that underpinned the church’s response to abuse

An inadequate understanding of:

- The nature of abuse
- The lifelong impact of abuse on its victims: “abuse isn’t over when it’s over”
- How victims could be retraumatised when perpetrators abuse is seen as a serious personal flaw

- The effectiveness of therapy and pastoral care changing an offender
- Church leaders desire to protect the good name of the church

8. Naming the elements which combine to produce a culture (artifacts, explicit and implicit)

9. Naming and critiquing the culture

- Suggesting what needs to happen for a new culture to be born
- A new culture in a church which is a child safe environment begins and proceeds with the experience, the life sentence of victims

10. Conclusion (Five foundational elements of a new culture)

- 1) It will no longer be possible to claim that ‘we didn’t know’ about sexual abuse.
- 2) It will no longer be possible to see an offender’s abuse as a personal flaw rather than a crime from which a victim never recovers fully.
- 3) It will no longer be possible to blame only the perpetrator. While one may be guilty, all of us are responsible, and few more so than the churches who offer themselves as “artisans of a new humanity”, providing “coming generations with reasons for living and hoping.”¹
- 4) It will no longer be possible for priests to imagine that we are free from expressions and obligations of accountability and transparency that are routine in workplaces across Australia.
- 5) It will no longer be possible to imagine that clericalism has anything to do with God.² It deserves to be called out when it occurs.

¹ *Gaudium et Spes* #30-31

² Pope Francis 13 December 2016