

8 February 2017

Dear Solicitor

I am appearing before the commission tomorrow.

I provided a statement on 27 January 2017.

In the statement, I provided a dot point which stated:

'I don't think the operation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions. I concede that the royal commission may have evidence to the contrary. If such evidence exists, I've not seen it.'

In recent days I have read for the first time the complete statement and evidence of Julie Stewart. I had not previously appreciated that she was 'groomed' by Fr Searson in the confessional over many months. I had thought that the assault upon her was an isolated single event.

In light of this evidence, I would amend my statement to read:

'I am aware of only one case in which the operation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation by a deviant priest resulted in child sexual abuse. I concede that the royal commission may have evidence of other instances. If such evidence exists, I have not seen it.'

Thanks

Frank Brennan

Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO
CEO
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