

HILL, BROTHER MICHAEL HILL

To the Chief of Staff

NEWS TIP: Catholic religious Brother commits suicide while on child-abuse charges

A member of the Catholic religious order of Marist Brothers was found hanged in New South Wales on Tuesday morning, 23 March, a few hours before he was due to appear in court on child-abuse charges. He was Brother Raymond Foster, who formerly taught at Marist Brothers schools in Queensland and New South Wales.

Foster was found hanged at a Marist Brothers retirement home in Mittagong, south-west of Sydney. (ADDRESS: Marist Centre, Old South Road, Mittagong; telephone 02-4871-1520 [or 02-4872-1911].)

Foster had been interviewed by Queensland police and was due to appear in a Sydney magistrates court on Tuesday morning, 23 March, to be extradited to Queensland. (The Queensland police officer, who had gone to NSW to charge Foster, is Mick Molloy, of the Mackay Juvenile Aid Bureau; the officer in charge of the Mackay Juvenile Aid Bureau is Detective Sergeant Steve St George, telephone 07-4968-3480.)

The charges against Brother Foster involved indecent assaults allegedly committed against boys at REDACTED College, in REDACTED, Queensland, in the early 1970s. Brother Foster was the senior science master there. Foster had previously been known as "Brother Celestine" but, about this time, the Marist Brothers were changing back to their real names. REDACTED College, which is co-educational, is the only Catholic secondary school in REDACTED. In the early 1970s, about half of its teachers were members of religious orders (about three or four Brothers and about three or four Nuns).

Foster later taught at other Catholic schools, and it is believed that one of these was in Lismore NSW.

Foster is one of several Catholic religious personnel who have committed suicide while facing child-abuse charges.

\*Brother REDACTED, a member of the Christian Brothers order, of Wollongong NSW, gassed himself in his car on 18 December 1994 while on the run from NSW police. REDACTED was found dead in a car in bushland near Rockhampton, Queensland. (Reported in the Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, on 19 December 1994 - and probably also in the Sydney papers.)

\*Father REDACTED, 49, of Melbourne and Townsville, was found dead in his Gold Coast home a few hours after being interviewed by Melbourne detectives on 18 August 1995, concerning sexual assaults of boys at Catholic parishes in Melbourne. After the Melbourne offences, the Catholic Church had transferred Gubbels to Townsville but, when he died, he was working as a bus driver at Jupiters Casino on the Gold Coast. (Reported in Brisbane Sunday Mail, 27 Aug. 1995, page 17; the GOLD Coast Bulletin, 29 Aug. 1995, page 1; Townsville Bulletin, 29 Aug. 1995.)

\*Father REDACTED, 65, died from an overdose of medication in Victoria on 18 September 1995, just three days after he had been charged by police with sexual penetration of a 12-year-old boy. (Reported in Latrobe Valley Express, Vic., 26.9.95, page 2; South Gippsland Sentinel Times, 26.9.95; Leongatha Star, Vic., 26.9.95.)

\*Brother REDACTED, 73, of the Marist Brothers, died "suddenly" in Victoria on 26 October 1998, after being charged by police with sexual assaults of boys and girls in Gippsland, Victoria. (Death notice in the Melbourne Herald Sun, 28.10.98; also a second notice, inserted by two of his female victims, REDACTED, in the Herald Sun two days later.)

\*A former Christian Brother, REDACTED, 65, was found dead in 1998, gassed in his car, near Brisbane, after detectives initiated a prosecution against him for sexual offences allegedly committed against boys while he was a Christian Brother in Queensland schools in the 1960s (see Courier Mail, 11 November 1998).

- From the Broken Rites victim support group,  
national office, Melbourne, phone 03-9457-4999